# A Guide to Japanese Buddhism

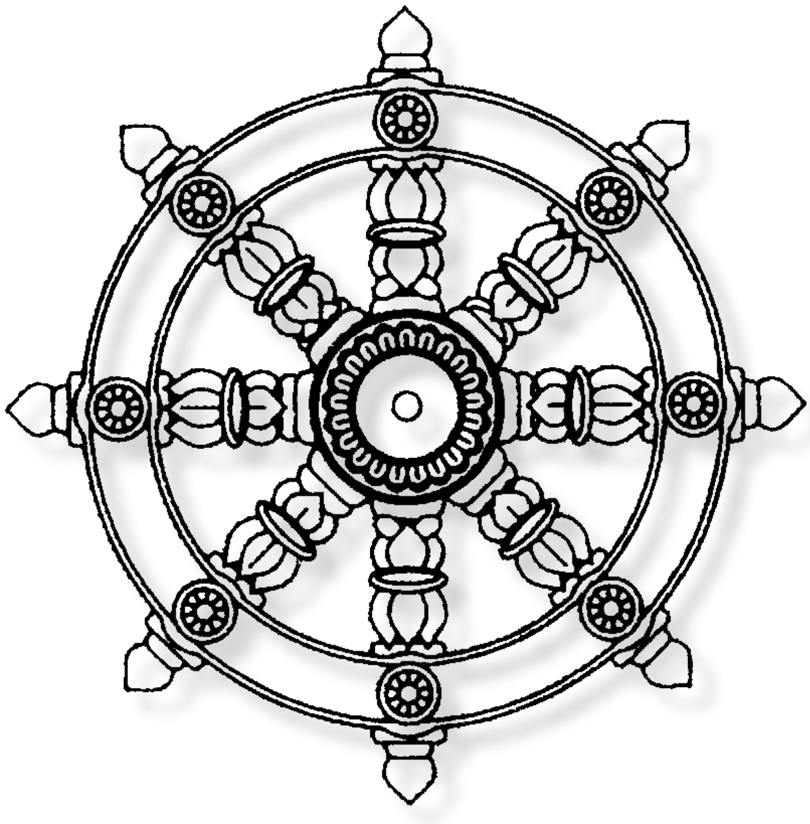
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Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.

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Japan Buddhist Federation



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| *First edition published:* | October 2004 |
| *Published by:* | Japan Buddhist Federation<br>Meisho Kaikan Hall 2F, 4–7–4, Shiba-koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0011, Japan<br>Phone: +81–3–3437–9275 Fax: +81–3–3437–3260<br>E-mail: info@jbf.ne.jp<br>URL: http://www.jbf.ne.jp |
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| *Designed and printed by:* | JABICS (Japanese Buddhism International Communications Service) Department, Omega-Com, Inc.<br>Mita Keio Busidence 2F, 2–14–4, Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108–0073, Japan |

# Contents



## Part I

## *A Brief History of Buddhism in Japan*



## Part II

## *The Japanese and Buddhism*

## Part III
### *Toward the Future*



## Part IV
### *Appendixes*



***Notes to the Reader:***

1. Japanese personal names are traditionally written surname first. In this book, the authors have followed this tradition for persons who lived before the Meiji Restoration of 1867. However, in keeping with modern Japanese editorial practice for publications in foreign languages, names of persons who lived after that date are written surname last.

2. The Japanese, Sanskrit, and Pali languages make distinction between long and short vowels that are often important to meaning. In this book (excluding Appendixes), long vowels are indicated by a long mark (-).

# Preface

In the past ten years or so, people have become interested in Buddhism worldwide, and Buddhist studies have advanced remarkably. In the fifth century B.C., the founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, started the propagation of his teachings in India, which have since spread to Southeast Asia, the Chinese continent, the Korean peninsula, and Japan. In other parts of the world, Buddhism was regarded as an exotic religion or a philosophical system of thought. However, Buddhism became known worldwide after the 20th century, with the rapid advancement of the modern technologies of communication and transportation, and interchange of personnel, materials, and information: Particularly after World War II, many people recognized Buddhism as the third universal religion, along with Christianity and Islam.

With the indiscriminate terrorist attack in the United States on September 11 of 2001 and incessant war and conflict among monotheistic Christian and Muslim zealots also happening elsewhere in the world presently, conscientious people have become aware that Buddhism offers something to remedy the tension and contribute to world peace. In other words, while Christians and Muslims tend to adhere to their own God as absolute and almighty, they seem to disregard other religions as minor or inferior. On the other hand, Buddhists recognize that the Buddha nature is entailed in every sentient being, and are relatively generous toward other religions. This is the reason why Buddhism has become spotlighted.

The Japanese have been greatly influenced by Eastern civilization through Buddhism ever since Buddhism was first introduced to Japan in the sixth century through the Eurasian continent. In the past 1,600 years, those Eastern civilizations were integrated in Japan with the indigenous civilization. The Japanese were able to produce their own unique culture during the period of isolation when they avoided being colonized by the advanced nations of the West. However, Japan was forced to open its doors at the beginning of the 19th century, and from this time was greatly influenced by Western civilization.

In order to catch up with the advanced nations of the West, the Japanese differentiated the merits and demerits of Eastern and

Western civilizations, and tried to absorb the good portions of both and integrate them into their own civilization. This successful integration seems to owe mainly to the Japanese flexible and inquisitive spirit and their diligence nurtured by the influence of Buddhism.

Nevertheless, after Japan was defeated by the Allied Powers at the end of World War II, most Japanese lost their raison d'etre and their confidence, finding solace in the pursuit of money and materialism. Despite the fact that Japan was completely reduced to ash because of the war, it rose again like a phoenix due to the ceaseless endeavors of the Japanese, reviving to become the second economic giant of the world. However, with the recent economic recession and unforeseeable future, Japanese have been recently exposed to such risks as deflation, threat of terrorist attack, increasing crime, the degeneration of morals, and the spread of infectious diseases. As a result, they have become aware of the limits of modernization and globalization. Buddhism has now once gain attracted their attention as a solution to external and internal crises with the belief of the coexistence of all sentient beings as one.

Most Japanese Buddhist leaders in the past were fairly passive in their attempts to propagate Buddhism, since from the inception of Buddhism it had been a state religion warmly protected by succeeding governments. Particularly during the rule by the Tokugawa military bureaucracy of the 16th century, all the people of Japan were registered at their nearby temples as parishioners, and both the clergy and the laity were content with their way of life and lost their religious zeal. Buddhism tended to be regarded as nothing more than a premodern folk religion. However, triggered by foreigners and contemporary scientists claiming that Buddhism transcends the manmade ideologies of religion and science, they began to reevaluate the legitimacy of the Buddhist teachings. In response to this new tendency, most Japanese Buddhist denominations and organizations have recently generated a new atmosphere breaking away from their obsolete conventional ways, making a positive stance for religious and social affairs. They are also making their utmost effort to contribute to the social welfare and world peace in cooperation with other religious and secular organizations in Japan, as well as the world at large.

Formerly, most Buddhist denominations and organizations in

Japan had to a certain degree carried out their religious and social activities to their own benefit and worked solely within their own purview. However, keenly feeling the necessity to communicate more closely with each other to address various contemporary issues, they established the Japan Buddhist Federation in 1957 consisting of 58 Buddhist denominations, 35 prefectural Buddhist associations, and nine other Buddhist groups. The Japan Buddhist Federation is the sole Japanese representative to the World Fellowship of Buddhists.

The book *Understanding Japanese Buddhism* was published at the occasion of the 12th general conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, held in Tokyo and Kyoto in 1978, to make Japanese Buddhism and its activities better known both domestically and internationally. Since 20 some years have already passed since then, during which many things have changed, necessitating the revising of its contents for updating the information. Therefore, we recently established this editorial committee under the aegis of the Japan Buddhist Federation (JBF) in Tokyo to publish this handy multipurpose guidebook on Japanese Buddhism. The members of the editorial committee are Rev. Shōdō Kobayashi, Rev. Kantai Sakamoto, Rev. Gisei Tomatsu, and myself. With the kind approval of the JBF Director's Board, the essence of Japanese Buddhism will be introduced to the degree possible, but due to a limited budget and space some relevant essays were inevitable omitted.

Contributions to the essays in this book have been mostly made by myself, and the appendixes by the staff members of JBF and myself. For more information about Japanese Buddhism, please refer to the appendixes at the end of this book. We welcome your opinions and comments on this book, so that we may improve the contents in the near future. I accept full responsibility for the contents and expression of this book.

Lastly, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Karen Mack for her editorial assistance for this handy guide book.

Autumn 2004

Kōdō Matsunami
Chief Editor
Editorial Committee
Japan Buddhist Federation

# Part I

## *A Brief History of Buddhism in Japan*

# 1. Buddhism Introduced to Japan

## Presentation of Korean Buddhist Materials

Buddhism is considered to have been officially introduced to Japan in A.D. 538 when the ruler of Baekje, a Korean kingdom, presented a brilliant image of the Buddha along with scripture-scrolls and ornaments to the Japanese Emperor Kimmei. In those days, Emperor Kimmei ruled Japan with his court nobles and immediately controversy started over whether or not such a foreign cult should be accepted. The orthodox Mononobe and Nakatomi clans strongly opposed this new religion on the grounds that Japan already had its traditional and indigenous religion of Shinto. But the influential Soga clan favored Buddhism; they believed that it had much to offer for the enrichment of their culture. Thus in the end, despite the disputes that took place among the court nobles, the emperor deferred the matter to the Soga clan.

About 40 years later, the pious Prince Regent Shōtoku (A.D. 574–621) was appointed regent to the Empress Suiko, at which time he declared Buddhism as the official religion. Prince Shōtoku was a great statesman and a devout Buddhist. He strongly believed that only with Buddhist teachings could he make Japan a unified and culturally refined country.

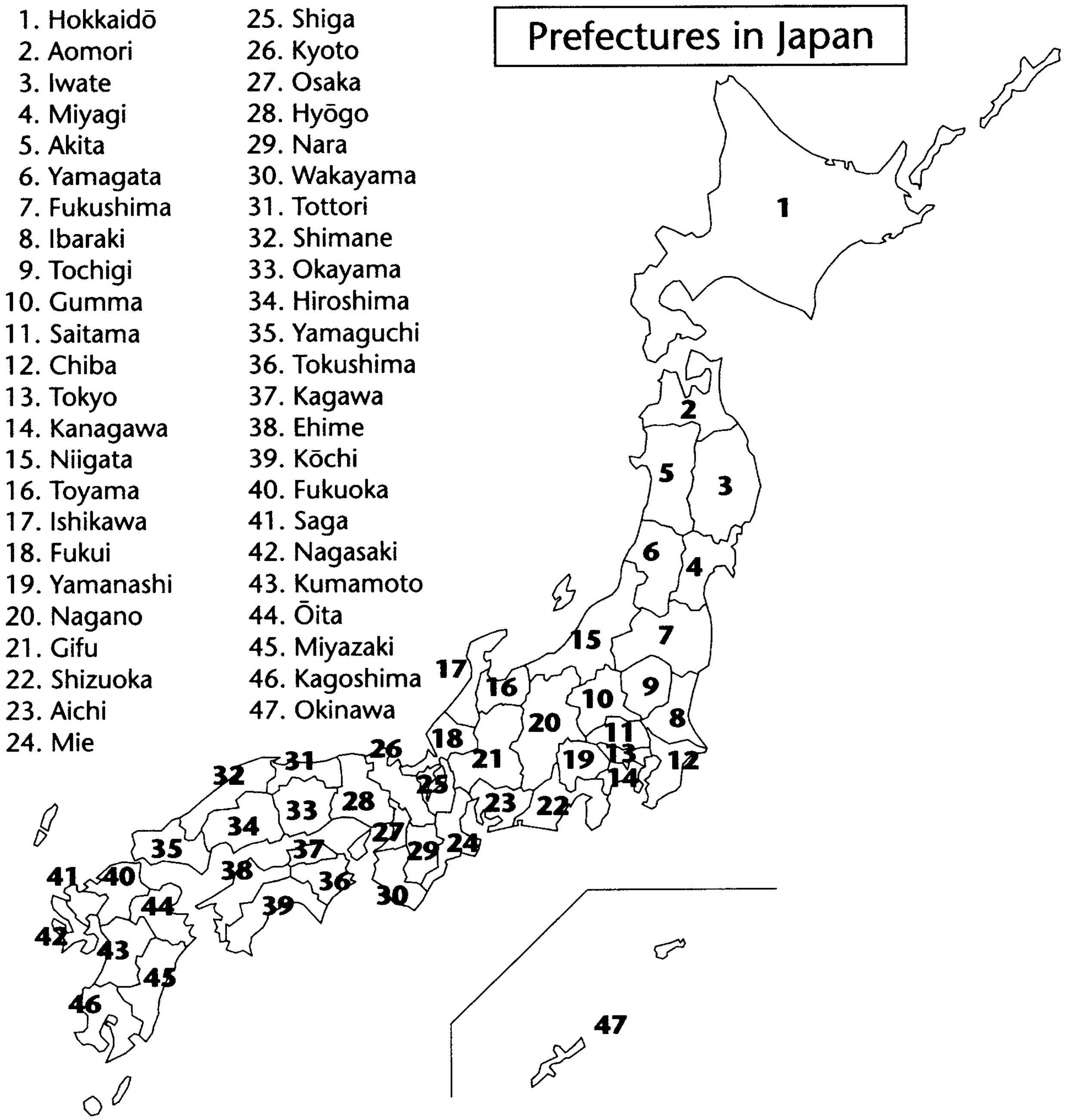
## Prince Shōtoku's Support of Buddhism

In order to carry out his plans, Prince Shōtoku issued the 17–Article Constitution in 604, which emphasized Buddhist and Confucian principles. Article II of this injunction reads, "Fervently respect the Three Treasures." Prince Shōtoku stressed that everyone should faithfully revere the Three Treasures (the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) as the supreme and unmistakable guidance.

He also ordered the government to build many Buddhist temples among which the most famous is Hōryu-ji temple, the world's oldest wooden structure now standing near the former capital of Nara. It was because of his patronage and devotion that Buddhism was firmly established on Japanese soil.

## Cultural Benefits of Buddhism

Therefore, we can see that in the beginning the introduction of Buddhism to Japan was highly motivated by political and cultural reasons. The court wanted to establish a system in which the existing clans could be consolidated. Buddhism offered both moral and intellectual benefits which Shinto lacked and it was these cultural learnings that attracted the court. Since Japan did not have a formal written language at the time, all of the Buddhist scriptures that were used were in Chinese. Thus at first, Buddhism was almost exclusive to the court families. However, the subsequent history of Buddhism in Japan demonstrated a gradual process of Buddhist acculturation downward through a ladder of social strata.



# 2. The Nara Period (A.D. 710–784)

## National Support of Buddhism

After the death of Prince Regent Shōtoku, Buddhism continued to flourish among court nobles, monks, and artisans. National Buddhist temples, called *kokubunji,* were built by the Emperer Shōmu in every province, the headquarters of which was at Tōdai-ji temple in Nara. Buddhist scriptures were introduced from China and without much modification they were studied by the Japanese monks. Buddhist images and ornaments were made by the Japanese artisans, some of which can still be seen in the older temples in Japan.

Buddhist temples in those days were the center of culture; they were not only used as places of worship, but also as schools, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages, and refuges for older people. The monks were also school teachers, physicians, engineers, and developers of many construction projects. Therefore, the Japanese government encouraged and supported the Buddhist institutions and monks spiritually and materially, so that they could work with the government and the people more effectively.

## The Six Nara Schools of Buddhism

As the numbers of monks increased, they were gradually classified into six Buddhist schools; namely, the Sanron, Hossō, Kegon, Ritsu, Kusha, and Jōjitsu. These schools were direct importations from China and were studied at the various government-established temples.

These six schools were not independent sects, but existed in one temple side by side just like various departments in a college, and each school contributed much to the development of later Buddhist thought in Japan.



The solemn gate at the entrance to a Buddhist temple



Temples are crowded on New Year's with people praying for a happy New Year



Many visit to pray to this sculpture of Amitābha-buddha (a national treasure)



Seeing off the spirits of deceased relatives at the time of O-Bon
by floating lanterns on the waters



Even today many regardless of age are fond of the Tea Ceremony

# 3. The Heian Period (A.D. 794–1185)

## Introduction of Tendai Buddhism

In 784, the Japanese capital was transferred from Nara to Kyoto, and accordingly became the Buddhist center of Japan. Soon after, two new Buddhist schools were introduced from China, namely Tendai and Shingon. The six Buddhist schools were gradually overshadowed by these two schools.

Saichō (767–822) established a Japanese Tendai school on Mount Hiei near Kyoto, and tried to synthesize all the then existing philosophical concepts. While in China, he studied Esotericism, Zen, and Pure Land Buddhism along with the Tiantai Buddhism. He also studied the *Brahmajāla Sutra (Bonmōkyō),* a modification of the Hinayana precepts. Upon his return to Japan he refuted the standpoints of all other schools, particularly of the Sanron and Hossō schools, and instead expounded the Ekayana doctrine based on the *Saddharma Pundarīka Sutra.* It emphasized the belief that all forms of life stood on an equal basis in attaining Buddhahood, so that even conciliation between Buddhism and Shinto was made possible.

## Establishment of a Mahayana Ordination Platform

In those days all the Buddhist monks had to accept the Hinayana precepts at the official ordination platform *(kaidan),* otherwise they were not admitted or qualified as Buddhist monks. Saichō, dissatisfied with this rule, wanted to be recognized under the Mahayana precepts which were suitable for Japanese monks. Several times he submitted a petition to the Emperor Saga to open a Mahayana ordination platform on Mount Hiei, and only after his death was the request granted by the Empreror in 822. From this time on, the Tendai school gained independence from the older schools in Japan, and from the fetter of the Hinayana precepts.

After Saichō there were two outstanding leaders in Tendai Buddhism: Ennin (794–864) and Enchin (814–891), who had studied both Tendai philosophy and the rituals of esoteric Buddhism in China. It was due to their contributions that Japanese Tendai could meet the desires of its supporters for esoteric rituals. Saichō, their master and

the founder of Japanese Tendai, was not able to embrace the esoteric teachings completely. In the course, however, his successors were to fulfill the unfinished work of their master Saichō. Saichō's all inclusive Buddhism was thus gradually enriched by his faithful disciples.

## Introduction of Shingon Buddhism

Kūkai (774–835) was a contemporary of Saichō, and he also studied Esoteric Buddhism in China. Upon his return to Japan, he established the Shingon school on Mount Kōya, and expounded the mystical teaching of Oneness with Vairochana Buddha based on the text of the *Mahāvairocana Sutra (Dainichikyō).* Unlike Saichō, Kūkai did not deny the validity of the Hinayana precept. He accepted both the Hinayana and the Mahayana precepts and interpreted them according to his own esoteric teaching. He classified Buddhist thought into two parts: esoteric and exoteric, and taught that all schools of Buddhism other than Shingon were exoteric, because they were known and revealed by the historical Shakyamuni Buddha.

On the other hand, in esoteric Buddhism, truth is hidden and must be revealed. There are in the universe the knower and the known, and they must be identical with Vairochana Buddha through the mystical practices of mantra (invocations) and mudra (hand gestures) in order for the universe to be in harmony. Kūkai also classified the then existing concepts into ten parts according to the degree of profundity: 1) No doctrines at all; 2) Confucianism and Taoism; 3) The Sankya and Vaiseshika schools; 4) The Kusha school; 5) The Jōjitsu school; 6) The Hossō school; 7) The Sanron school; 8) The Tendai school; 9) The Kengon school; and 10) The Shingon school. According to him, the Shingon school is the supreme and complete form of religion, while the other schools are lesser and incomplete.

## Rising Power of Tendai and Shingon

However, the philosophical speculation of Tendai and the mystical ritualism of Shingon had only attracted the minds of court nobles, monks, and scholars who were weary of studying Buddhism theoretically without religious practice. The monks, belonging to either the Tendai or Shingon schools, became independent from the six schools and defended themselves from the influence of the government.

Once they obtained the privilege of being monks, they lived together at the leading temples and became a third power standing against the Imperial government and its counterpart. The temple life became lax and there was degeneration and corruption among some of the monks in Buddhist institutions. Seeing this, the ordinary people were greatly discouraged and deeply impressed by the impermanency and vicissitudes of life.

# 4. The Kamakura Period (A.D. 1192–1333)

## Changes of the Kamakura Period

Buddhism was confined to the privileged classes of court nobles, monks, scholars, and artisans who had enough time to master the complicated philosophy and rituals of Buddhism. It was in the Kamakura period that a drastic change took place in the field of religion; Buddhism became for the first time the religion of the masses.

The old court eventually fell to a new military government which brought about the Kamakura period (1192–1333). The increasing discord and chaos of the times led to disillusionment and a call for the revival of faith. It was during these troubled time that Hōnen (1133–1212), Shinran (1173–1262), Eisai (1141–1215), Dōgen (1200–1253), Nichiren (1222–1282), and other Buddhist leaders appeared and expounded their teachings of salvation for all.

## Development of Popular Buddhism

They were always on the side of the masses, discarding the existing aristocratic Buddhist hierarchy and its theoretical implications. Before this, only the elite class could enjoy the grandeur of Buddhist art and ceremony represented by glorious images, paintings, and ornaments. Strongly dissatisfied with these phenomena, these Buddhist leaders tried to reevaluate Buddhism through their own painful life experiences. The conclusion reached was that everyone had a potential Buddha Nature and thus could be saved by the mercy of the Buddha if one had firm faith in him. The new thoughts were based on the Bodhisattva doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism, particularly that of the Tendai school, which advocated that every sentient being has a Buddha Nature and is capable of becoming a Buddha.

As the new military government was established by Minamoto no Yoritomo at Kamakura in 1192, five prominent Buddhist schools were founded one by one, namely the Jōdo, Jōdo Shin, Rinzai Zen, Sōtō Zen, and Nichiren. They had common stand-points; they were established on the foundation of the Tendai doctrine and yet transcended it in their own respective ways.

## Hōnen and Pure Land Buddhism

Hōnen (1133–1212) studied the Tendai doctrine thoroughly on Mount Hiei, and yet he was dissatisfied with a teaching which only taught the definition of salvation and the superiority of the Tendai doctrine as opposed to other schools of thought. However, what he wanted was a way to relieve others from suffering and to gain salvation himself. One day he came across the Genshin's *Ōjōyōshū* (The essentials of rebirth) in which he found a passage by the Chinese monk Shandao, "Only call the name of Amida Buddha with one's whole heart—whether walking or standing still, whether sitting or lying—this is the practice which brings salvation without fail, for it is in accordance with the original vow of the Buddha."

In this passage he had at last found what he was seeking. He did not, however, deny the validity of other elaborate teachings and methods found in other schools. But he was convinced that this simple and straight forward calling of Amida Buddha was the only way for him and for everyone else who needed relief in that turbulent and degenerate age, because it required no elaborate rituals or complicated philosophy, but only the *nembutsu,* "Namu Amida Butsu," which anyone can do anywhere.

## Opposition to Pure Land Buddhism

In 1175, Hōnen established the independent Jōdo (Pure Land) school which was based on three canonical texts, the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sutra (Muryōjukyō),* the *Smaller Sukhavativyuha Sutra (Amidakyō),* and the *Amitāyurdhyāna Sutra (Kan Muryōjukyō).* He wrote the *Senchakuhongan Nembutsushū* (Passages on the selection of the *nembutsu* in the original vow) in order to defend his standpoint against the orthodox schools, and preached the teaching of the *nembutsu* (the recitation of Namu Amida Butsu) to the masses of the people.

However, his ever-increasing popularity among them encountered strong opposition from other schools and government, so that in 1207 his teachings were prohibited and he was exiled to the Isle of Shikoku with a handful of disciples. Later he was permitted to return and his teachings were officially recognized. One of Hōnen's disciples, Shinran, further developed his teachings and established the Jōdo Shin school.

## Shinran and Shinshū Buddhism

Shinran (1173–1262) deeply perceived the weak nature of human beings, and had become convinced that salvation could only be found in self-surrender and in complete reliance on the saving power of Amida Buddha. What mattered to Shinran was no longer Amida Buddha, as the object of worship, but "Namu Amida Butsu." Amida Buddha as *upāya* (expedient device) can be objectified, but not "Namu Amida Butsu," for it is the actual interrelationship between subject and object; it is not a static "thing;" but a dynamic "event."

He totally abandoned the precepts of both Hinayana and Mahayana which were "musts" for all monks in those days. Instead he got married and called himself the most wicked man in the world. He simple wanted to identify himself with ordinary people in order to save his wretched self and to pave the way of relief for other suffering people.

## Introduction of Rinzai Zen

Zen Buddhism was introduced to Japan by Eisai and firmly established by Dōgen. Eisai (1141–1215) studied the Tendai doctrine on Mount Hiei and then went to China where he found that the Tendai (Tiantai in Chinese) had already declined and the study of Zen was flourishing. He therefore studied Zen and brought back to Japan many Zen texts such as the *Linchi-lu* (Analects of Master Linchi; known as the *Rinzai-roku* in Japan), the *Pi-yen-lu* (The blue cliff record; known as the *Hekigan-roku* in Japan), and the *Huaiangou-yu* (The story of the country Huaian; known as the *Kaian Kokugo* in Japan), and established Rinzai Zen. Zen Buddhism teaches that there is nothing to rely upon but one's true self. Everyone has the Buddha-nature and the potentiality to become a Buddha, and yet it is hidden because of our illusions.

The aim of Zen is to throw off one's illusions and all artificiality and to see directly into the innermost nature of one's being. In order to awaken oneself and gain an intuitional understanding of life, Rinzai Zen stresses the practice of sitting in meditation and koan study. The koan is a pedagogic device which generally is put in the form of a problem. For example, "What was your original face before your mother gave birth to you?" or "When your corpse is cremated

and the ashes are scattered to the winds, where are you?" These highly metaphysical questions must be answered immediately without resorting to any kind of logical reasoning process, because Zen is not a philosophical exercise but a way of life. This teaching was greatly favored by the military class, particularly by the Hōjō family at Kamakura, and the government assisted the building of monasteries and temples for Eisai and his disciples.

## Introduction of Sōtō Zen

Dōgen (1200–1253) also studied Zen in China, and upon his return to Japan he established Sōtō Zen. From the beginning, Dōgen disliked to engage in worldly affairs and hated to submit to the authority and power of the military government. He built Eihei-ji, the mountain monastery, in Fukui Prefecture and wrote 95 volumes of essays. Sōtō Zen teaches that the practice of sitting in meditation is the sole means to discover our true selves and to attain enlightenment. It does not require any reasoning or inferring.

Zen meditation is not a mystic union with Buddha or the simple confrontation with a religious object for one in a prescribed discipline at a specific time and place, but rather a way of life for everyone in any circumstances. It teaches a way to live and to die peacefully, meaningfully, and pleasantly. This teaching particularly attracted the warriors whose lives were constantly threatened by their enemies. The Bushido, the warrior's spirit, developed out of its teaching.

## Nichiren and the *Lotus Sutra*

Nichiren (1222–1282) studied the then existing Buddhist schools of thought extensively, from which he chose the *Lotus Sutra (Saddharma Pundarīka Sutra)* as the most reliable text. He established the Nichiren school which is of Japanese origin and proclaimed that the eternal life of the historical Buddha is revealed in us. He stressed that by reciting the name of this text, "Namu Myōhōrenge Kyō" in Japanese, with our whole heart, we can become one with the eternal Buddha and gain enlightenment. He denounced all other existing schools strongly on the ground that their teachings refer to salvation only in the next world.

According to him, no texts except the *Lotus Sutra* are a direct and authentic revelation to us who are living in this world. Since he wrote

the *Risshō Ankokuron* (The establishment of righteousness in the rule of the country) and tried to persuade the government also to be blessed and ruled by his teaching, he was punished by the government and exiled to the Izu Peninsula and the Isle of Sado. Later he was pardoned to return to Kamakura. He built the Kuon-ji temple on Mount Minobu afterward and settled there for the rest of his life. His worldly and patriotic spirit accelerated the rise of the new subsects which we see in contemporary Japan.

## Peak of Religious Consciousness

There were many other fine personalities living during this period, but they are somewhat less significant compared to the above mentioned Hōnen, Shinran, Eisai, Dōgen, and Nichiren. No new major schools have arisen since the Kamakura period. Those that did arise were more or less the filling-in and working-out of details in the existing ones. That is, after the Kamakura period, there was nothing that stimulated the growth of new thought except the flourishing Jōdo, Zen, and Nichiren schools of the Kamakura period.

Although during this period little productivity in art and literature was seen, a well-disciplined and concentrated spirit, as well as religious zeal and originality were crystallized by the founders of the newly established schools. Therefore, it was a time in Japanese history that religious consciousness attained its highest peak, and individual minds were freed from all the external bondages which had long obstructed spontaneous growth.

# 5. The Muromachi Period (a.d. 1336–1573)

## Flourishing of Culture in the Muromachi Period

Though the military government at Kamakura unified the country and won battles against the two Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281, it began to decline and collapse in the next century. Once again Japan was in chaos and encountered great political and social unrest with many civil wars. The ordinary people were perplexed and ill at ease. As a natural consequence, the people were obliged to seek solace by relying on religion. The worship of Avalokiteshvara (Kannon), the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion, flourished among the people at large.

When the new military government was established by Ashikaga Takauji in 1336, Japan was once again unified. More temples and monasteries were built through the patronage of the government or by contributions from the people. Buddhist culture also became highly developed during this period. The introduction of painting, calligraphy, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and gardening by the monks from China greatly influenced the formation of refinements in Japanese culture that have continued to develop up to the present time.

## Powerful Buddhist Institutions and Secluded Zen Temples

However, partial favoritism of certain schools by the government or the Imperial Household caused jealousy among Buddhist institutions and they either fought against each other or against the government. Particularly the leading temples on Mount Hiei and Mount Koya became the citadel of the priest-warriors of the Tendai and Shingon schools. The priests were more conspicuous as a military and political force than in their proper religious sphere.

Zen temples and monasteries, however, became hermitages for the monks who detached themselves from worldly affairs and either concentrated their minds on meditation or engaged in artistic creation. The Jōdo and Jōdo Shin schools were less significant during this period, but they quietly and steadily increased their influence among the populace.

# 6. The Momoyama Period (a.d. 1573–1603)

## Suppression of Buddhism by Oda Nobunaga

When Oda Nobunaga overthrew the military government of Ashikaga in 1573, he actively suppressed Buddhist institutions because he feared the increased power of the leading temples and monasteries which sided with his enemies. He favored the newly introduced foreign cult of Christianity for purely political reasons.

After the death of Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi took over his stand and also suppressed Buddhist institutions with the idea of bringing the ecclesiastical completely under the sway of the secular. With the surrender of the Buddhist institutions to the secular power of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, Buddhist art gradually lapsed into insignificance and was replaced by secular art.

# 7. The Edo Period (a.d. 1603–1867)

## Isolation of Japan and the Proscription of Christianity

When Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603 at Edo (the present Tokyo), he prohibited the Japanese to leave the country and foreigners to enter with few exceptions. The isolation of Japan lasted for the next 260 odd years; and during that time, Buddhism became purely ecclesiastical. The temples and monasteries destroyed by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi were restored by Ieyasu as comparatively modest and unfortified buildings. Ieyasu personally favored the Jōdo school and assisted in building Zōjō-ji temple in Tokyo, Chion-in temple in Kyoto, and other temples.

He also assisted in building Higashi Hongan-ji for financial and administrative reasons and divided the Jōdo Shin school into two subsects—Nishi Hongwanji and Higashi Hongwanji. The following successors of Ieyasu also followed his policies and continued to patronize Buddhism and to prescribe Christianity. These measures were taken in order to weaken and control the power of the Buddhist institutions and to protect Japan from foreign invasion. During this period, all temples became registry offices where births, marriages, deaths, and funerals had to be registered with the priest in charge and they were accordingly considered family temples. The priest lived in ease and idleness and they often gave the people cheap and worldly instruction.

## Rise of Shinto and Confucianism

Despite these unfavorable circumstances, Zen Buddhism continued to show some vitality. Hakuin appeared and revitalized Rinzai Zen with his fine personality and sermons. Bashō, who brought into fashion the 17-syllable haiku poetry, owed much to Zen. Ingen established Ōbaku Zen when he was invited from China to Japan in 1655. Tetsugen published a reprint of the Ming edition of the Buddhist canon *(Tripitaka)* in 1681 which is remarkable for its clear type printing.

However, from the 17th century on, the influence of Buddhism gradually declined and was overshadowed by the rise of the rival religious and political philosophies of Confucianism and Shinto.

In the first place both Buddhism and Shinto were identified by the decree of 1614, but later due to the roles of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto, the three were completely separated; i.e., Buddhism functioned in the sphere of religion; Confucianism in the moral; and Shinto in state politics. The idea of separation of these roles was consciously or unconsciously implanted in the minds of the Japanese and has been continuously held by them up to the present time. Buddhism was no longer a vital religion, but retained only its tradition which was handed down by the priests and monks from the Kamakura period.

# 8. Under Imperial Japan (a.d. 1868–1945)

## Proscription of Buddhism in the Meiji Era

The Meiji Restoration in 1868 ended the long isolation of Japan and restored the power of the Imperial Household which had been under the shadow of successive military governments for the previous 800 years. Japan opened its door to the world and encountered the impact of Western culture and technology. The policy of the Meiji government, therefore, went to both extremes in order to cope with modern nations. That is to say, Japan adopted Western culture and technology as a means of modernizing Japan and reaffirmed the Imperial Household, which was transferred from the ancient capital of Kyoto to the present day Tokyo in 1868, as the supreme sovereignty of Japan.

The Emperor was the object of worship as a living god of Shinto; and since Buddhism had no room in this schema, it was completely separated from Shinto. Buddhist beliefs and worship were banned by the order of the Meiji government in 1868. Many temples and valuable works of Buddhist art were either destroyed or sold. A large number of priests and monks were forced to return to lay life, although this ban was later lifted. The Buddhist institutions were, however, classified under 13 denominations and 56 subsects and the founding of any new sect was strictly prohibited.

## Buddhism and Military Expansionism

Fortunately or unfortunately, Buddhism had already been accepted by the Japanese as part of Japanese culture and tradition. Therefore, apart from its religious beliefs and practices, Buddhism had permeated even to the lowest strata of the people and was removed from few of them. Only a very small number of priests and monks endured and reaffirmed their Buddhist discipline despite the hardships.

They also reevaluated their religion in the light of modern scholarship. However, as time went on, this critical study and application of Buddhism was often interrupted by the nationalistic military government, and Buddhist institutions were once again utilized by it during two World Wars.

# 9. Contemporary Japan (a.d. 1945–)

## Two Streams in Modern Buddhism

Since the militaristic Imperial government surrendered to the Allied Powers in 1945, Buddhism has been neither the monopoly of Buddhist institutions nor of the government nor of a certain privileged class of people. Buddhist studies have been accelerated by the monks, ministers, and scholars in temples, institutions, and universities. Ancient treasures of Buddhist art have been preserved at temples and museums under the protection of the government. Once ruined temples have been restored and have become centers of study and worship. International Buddhist conferences have been held in Japan in which a number of programs have been initiated for the exchange of knowledge and individuals.

As can be seen from the above brief history of Buddhism in Japan, two streams of Buddhism have come to exist; one which flows from top down and one which flows from the bottom up. In other words, the former can be characterized as "Higher" or "Normative" Buddhism to which many of the Buddhist monks and their denominations belong, though not a form of state religion with official status; while the latter can be characterized as "Lower" or "Popular" Buddhism to which lay members usually profess. In the course and development of Buddhism in Japanese history, when the former acted too progressively, the latter appeared to regress; on the other hand, when the former became hopelessly stagnant, the latter demanded reform movements with religious zeal which ushered in changes in response to the social, economic, and political climate of the day. Because of these two streams which have been interacting with each other, Japanese Buddhism has come to the present time, enriching and developing both its inner and outer forms.

## Embracing Nature of Buddhism

The Japanese word for "faith" sometimes means "progress" as well, which can mean including something better from outside. Therefore, we see in Japanese Buddhism heterogeneous elements from other beliefs such as Hinduism, Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, and folk religion. Most Japanese Buddhists prefer substance and

quality over name or form and regard the virtue of the Buddha permeating to all corners of the world. It is pervasive but formless; it is difficult to grasp unless we are a part of it and living in it. This idea is in accordance with the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. That is why we are taught that all sentient beings, whatever we profess to, are within the hands of the Buddha.

Some say that this all-embracing attitude of Buddhists is nothing but degenerating Buddhism from its original for, making it insignificant and secular. But we do not believe that this is so. By assimilating other elements such as modern technology and Western thought, Buddhism in Japan has enriched and expanded its tenets and power while retaining its century-old traditions. In this way, it continually recreates itself.

## Buddhism at a New Juncture

However, at this juncture, Buddhism in Japan stands where its road forks—leading either to self-destruction or development. If it stands idle, it may lead to self-destruction, but if it looks ahead and struggles, it may lead to prosperous development.

At the time when the rigorous austerities, intellectualism, and self-affirming egoism have entered a blind alley, there is great perplexity, can these not be set free by the all-embracing sensitivity and ever-renewing selflessness of Buddhist teachings? In this sense, Buddhism in Japan would play a great role in order to give birth to a new sense of value not only in the present world but also in the world to come.

At present, the Japanese have an opportunity to open their eyes to see Buddhism not only as a part of their culture and tradition, but also as a religion and a way of life. Moreover, they are assured of freedom of belief. Individual minds are once again freed from all external bondage and fetters. At this time, they are free to choose their own belief from the already established or not-yet established systems of thought, religion, philosophy, and morals. It seems that they are now struggling to find the best and most suitable discipline to be the guiding light of their lives. No one can tell exactly where they are going, but one thing is clear, that is, they will never tread the same way as in the past. Instead of becoming tools of an already established culture and tradition, they are becoming fine designers of their own future.

# Part II

## *The Japanese and Buddhism*

# 1. Japanese Buddhism Today

## Secularization of Japanese Society

Foreigners visiting Japan for the first time are likely to think that it is a completely secularized country. It appears to be so because the majority of Japanese seem to be indifferent to religious matters, except on special occasions such as festivals or funeral services. Particularly when young Japanese are asked about their religious beliefs or commitment, they tend to reply with an expression of astonishment or to smile uncomprehendingly. The older generation understands religion primarily as means of social unity or as an aid in life or suffering.

In most Japanese homes, a Buddhist altar and a Shinto shrine which are believed to protect the house and family respectively, stand side by side. When people purchase a car, they usually hang a charm in it. The charm may be one blessed by a Buddhist priest or a Shinto priest.

## Neither Nor Situation of Buddhism and Shinto

According to a statistic issued by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs in the Japanese government in 2002, there are 95 million lay followers of Buddhism and a quarter million Buddhist priests and nuns with 86,000 institutions. It is interesting to note that when the 95 million Buddhist followers are added to an estimated 106 [million] Shinto followers, the total exceeds the total population of 120 million Japanese. These figures are taken from numbers registered at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. Therefore, this discrepancy may make little sense when analyzed in Western religious terms. However, it is not unusual for a Japanese person to belong to both institutions of Buddhism and Shintoism at the same time. Thus it appears that most Japanese have a minimal consciousness in regard to religion, at least in the terms of an "individual religion."

Judging from the fact mentioned above, one may wonder whether or not the 95 million Buddhist followers are, in a true sense, Buddhists. When you ask any Japanese person, "Are you Buddhist?" the

answer may be an ambiguous, "I may be so." This does not mean that they are not followers of Buddhism. For many, such a question is similar to asking, "Are you good or pretty?" Likewise, most are rather hesitant to confirm or commit themselves to any particular religion. They do not want to confine themselves within the domain of any fixed form of religion, rather they tend to regard religion as a means of attaining and ever-renewing a higher state of being.

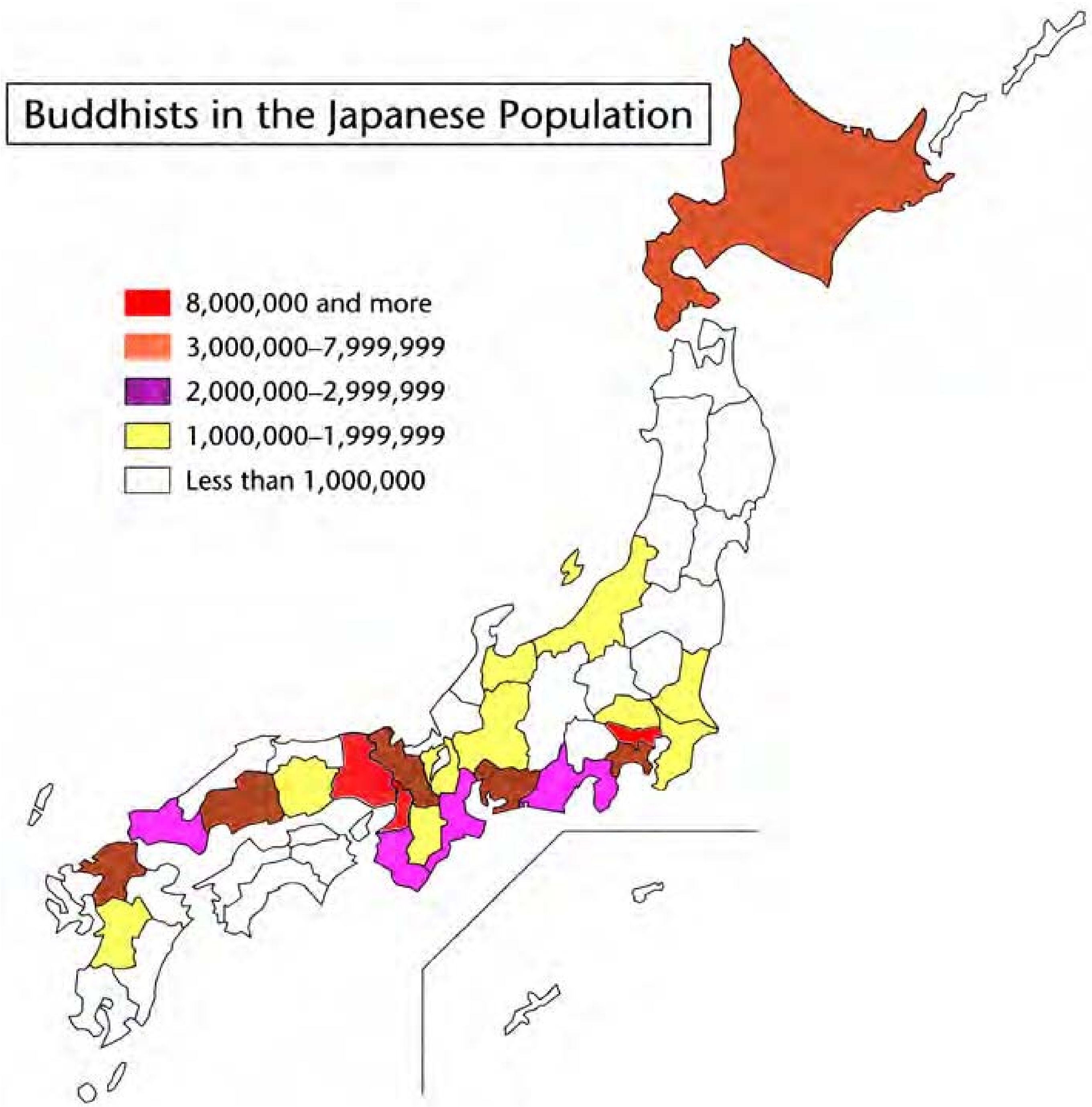
## Complimentary Roles of Buddhism and Shinto

Approximately 80 percent of Japanese people get married in a Shinto or Christian ceremony and 90 percent hold Buddhist services for a funeral ceremony. For them, Shintoism plays the role of governing the joyous side of life and Buddhism the somber side. This syncretic tendency is so prevalent among the Japanese that which religion they belong to may seem confusing.

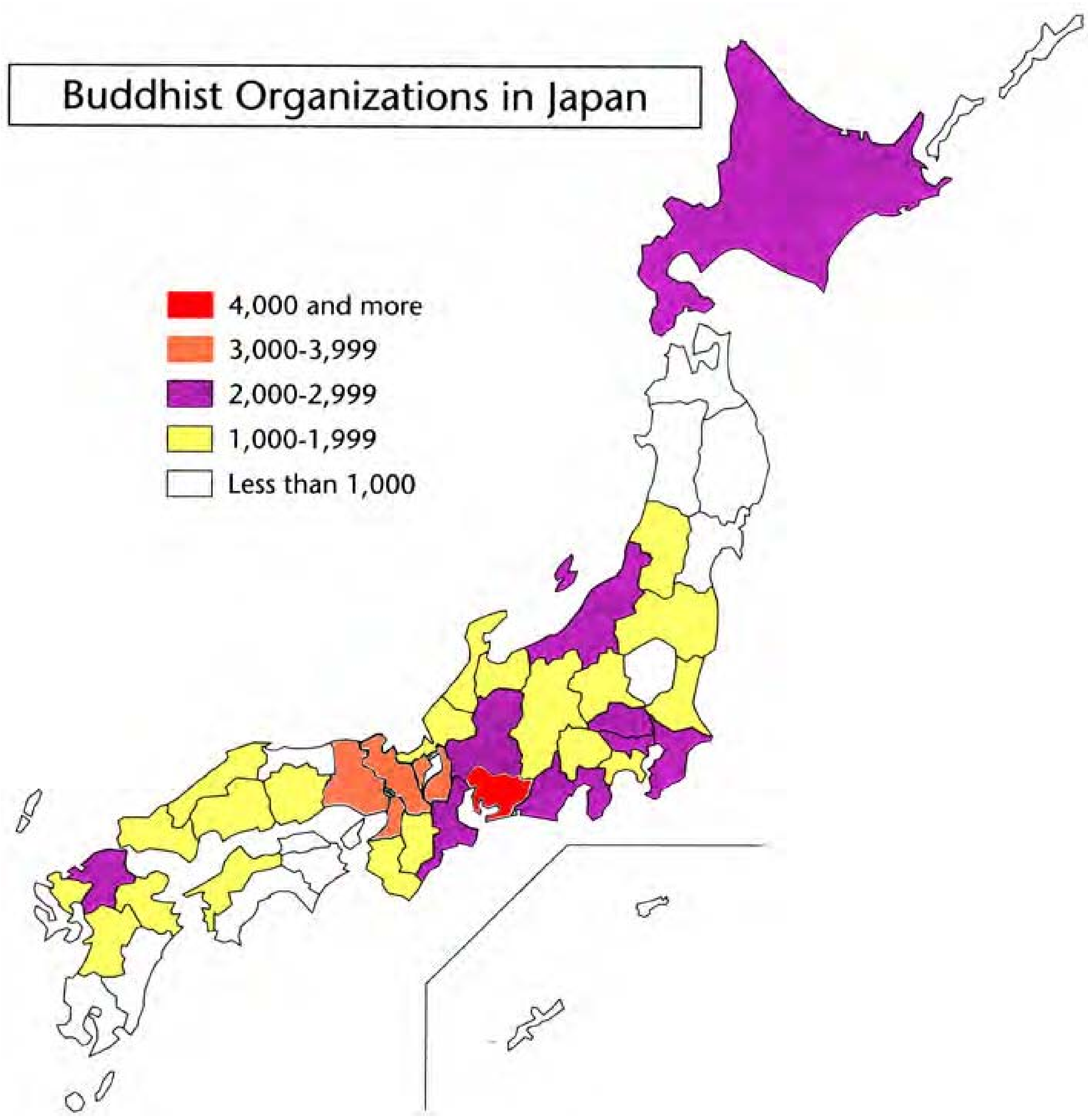
The variety of Japanese religiosity cannot be comprehended as an "either or" situation, as in the case of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, but rather as an "as well as" situation. This all embracing nature has permeated Japanese life so deeply that religion appears to be virtually invisible, except when it surfaces at concrete events. Therefore, both Buddhism and Shintoism are like peaks of an iceberg which emerge above the surface of the sea; and yet they share a common background of the numinous, upon which the Japanese way of life is based.

## Services Provided by Buddhist Temples

Ardent Japanese Buddhists have their family altar in the sitting room and chant the scriptures and offer flowers, water, and food to the main object of veneration enshrined there. They regard the family altar as a miniature temple of the heavens passed down from their parents to the oldest son of the family. Other sons and daughters set up their own altar when their parents pass away. For memorial or funereal services, they usually ask a priest to chant the scriptures on their behalf, either at the family altar or at the temple where their family graves are located. They then invite relatives or friends and share the service with them in order to strengthen their social ties centered around the deceased.




When people confront problems of life and death-whether spiritually, economically, or physically-they usually go to a temple and ask the priest for prayers to heal their wounded souls. Sometimes they make pilgrimages by visiting designated temples called *fudasho* and try to have their wishes fulfilled in that way. In rare cases, people have abandoned their family life for a certain period of time or even permanently to enter the priesthood and to receive religious training at a monastery.




To comply with the different needs of the people, most temples today open their gates and offer a variety of activities to their members and visitors. A number of services are held: sunrise services, family services, Sunday services, memorial services, and wedding and funeral services. Various club activities are also held at the temple, such as hymn singing, meditation, dancing, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, handicrafts, calligraphy, judo, kendo, karate, and boy and girl scouts. Every means are taken to attract people to the temple and to bless them with the teachings of Buddhism.

## Educating the Public about Buddhism

In the field of mass communications, Buddhist public lectures are offered either by the temple or by Buddhist organizations. Nationwide Buddhist programs are broadcast ever Sunday morning on television and radio. Newsletter, pamphlets, and leaflets are also distributed so that the activities of the temple or Buddhist organization can be made better known to the general public as well as their members.

Books and magazines on Buddhism are also being published in abundance and distributed to the public. Approximately 2,000 books on Buddhism were published in Japan in 2003 alone. Despite the fact that Japan is considered a Buddhist country and the majority of people belong to some Buddhist denomination, the religious content of Buddhism is not well known. In view of this pitiful condition, some Buddhist leaders are attempting to write more comprehensive books on Buddhism relevant to everyday life. Some of these books have become best sellers at major bookstores in Japan.

# 2. Buddhist Temples & the Japanese People

## Profound Influence of Buddhism in Japan

In its long history, Buddhism has permeated Japanese life so thoroughly that it is difficult for us to recognize the depth and breadth of its influence. This can be clearly seen wherever you visit Japan and notice the innumerable Buddhist temples situated in the center of town or high in the mountains. Their abundance indicates the importance of the temples or at least the importance they held at one time. At first sight, these temples may look alike but there are some differences among them in. terms of their origin and function.

The first temple in Japan is believed to have been built in Asuka at the outskirts of Nara in A.D. 606 by the order of Empress Suiko. Thereafter, temples were built with the assistance and patronage of the state or various clans until the Kamakura period beginning in the 12th century. Priests were employed by them to console the souls of the deceased of the privileged class. However, in succeeding generations more temples were built with the aid of the newly arisen warrior and merchant classes which overcame the aristocratic class. During the Edo period in the 17th century, the Tokugawa shogunate forced all the members of a Japanese family to register as parishioners at the temple nearest them, regardless of whether they were believers of Buddhism or not.

## The Official Status of Buddhism

This custom called the *danka* system continues even to this day, despite the fact that freedom of belief is ensured by the Japanese constitution. In the Edo period, temples were the religious and cultural centers of the community, offering education and even medical aid to those in need. However, at the time of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Buddhism was suppressed by the ultranationalists and Shintoists, and a drastic change took place. Temples were obligated to be self-sufficient and lost much of their significance and influence.

This tendency was reinforced immediately after World War II, when the new constitution made clear the separation of state and religion. Even though temple properties are tax-exempt according to

the Religious Corporation Law effective since the third of April of 1946, temples have required supplementary means of maintaining their ground and functions with the support of their congregations.



A Buddhist temple in the middle of the modern cityscape of Tokyo

## A Guide to Japanese Buddhism

At present, temples may be classified into four categories in terms of function, although there is no clear-cut demarcation among them: 1) temples which serve as a center for funeral and memorial services for the parishioners; 2) temples which serve as a center of prayer and healing; 3) temples which serve as a center of religious training for priests; and 4) temples which display their treasures to the public.

A temple in the first category is a place where the priest and his family reside and perform a multitude of religious and social services for the parishioners and the greater community. Until the Meiji Restoration of 1868, celibacy was strictly observed among priests, with the exception of those belonging to the Jōdo Shin denomination of Pure Land Buddhism. However, at present, the majority of priests of any

denomination marry and lead a family life at the temple. Conducting such services and maintaining the parishioners' family graveyard provides the major source of income for priests who have a temple in this category. Sometimes these priests have supplementary jobs such as running a nursery school, a kindergarten, and a home for the elderly, and various other kinds of schools or work at a school or city office in the public sector.

A temple in the second category attracts visitors who ask the priest in charge for prayer and healing. Such temples belong mostly to the Nichiren denomination, or Shingon, Tendai, and other esoteric denominations. A priest who has undergone special religious training performs efficacious acts. People usually visit these temples individually, seeking practical benefits through prayer and healing.

A temple in the third category is called a monastery and is usually situated at the headquarters of each denomination. Priests and trainees reside together for a certain period of time and exercise their religious training as set forth by the denomination. These temples are sometimes off-limits to casual visitors.



A Kindergarten on the grounds of a temple

Temples in the fourth category are mostly situated in ancient cities such as Kyoto, Nara, or Kamakura where treasured sculptures, architecture, and gardens are preserved. Sometimes designated as national treasures or important cultural properties, they attract many visitors. Most of these temples charge an admission fee for viewing the treasures, which becomes a major source of income.

## Improving Social Intercourse with Lay People

Most priests are born and raised in a temple and inherit their father's profession as a priest. For this reason, they sometimes lack strong faith. People in turn are born into a Buddhist family and as long as they are registered at a temple, they are considered Buddhist. This proves to be a great hindrance to them for becoming true Buddhists with strong faith. Such people pay their respects to the various types of temples when the necessity arises and make use of temple properties according to their needs. The situation of Buddhist temples and their supporters being such, the raison d'etre of Buddhism as a living religion and a way of life is gradually losing its significance in society.

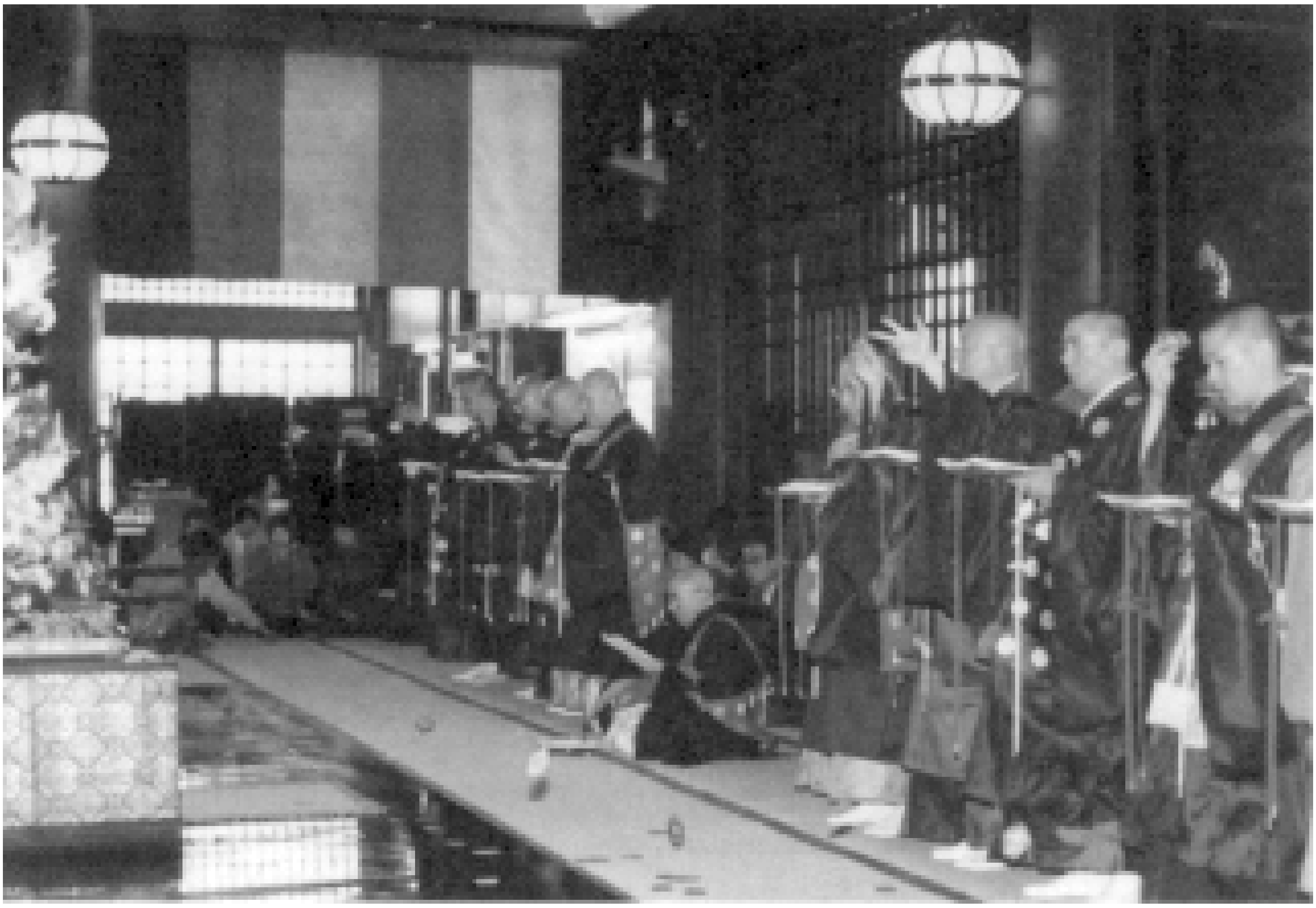
However, in view of this lack of social intercourse between the temple and the people, some conscientious priests have resolved to reactivate the original function of the temple by offering sermons, distributing pamphlets and books, and expressing their views on the problems of life and death to those who wish to listen. Some temples maintain schools, kindergartens, orphanages, hospitals, and homes for the elderly. Furthermore, an increasing number of city-dwellers at present visit temples at various occasions and are once again enjoying the quiet and serene atmosphere of temples, finding there peace of mind and a resting place in the midst of their bustling life in the concrete jungle.

# 3. Buddhist Rites of Passage in Traditional Japanese Life

## Japanese Harmonization of Various Elements

It has generally been said that Japanese culture was stimulated by one foreign culture after another-Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, European, and American—and made use of them as catalysts in its own formation. Throughout their history, the Japanese have consistently sought models outside Japan and created the composite whole of their culture by absorbing foreign elements rather than being swallowed by them. They have transformed and adapted them to their own needs and tastes rather than taking a single element as an absolute and excluding others.

This assimilationist tendency has been largely due to the fact that Japan is an isolated country which was unified very early as a nation with different ethnic groups (later on fused to one Yamato race) but one common language. I think that this pattern of retaining harmony within, while accepting new and different elements from outside



A memorial service for lay believers being held in a temple grand hall

open-mindedly, was nourished by the realistic and tolerant nature of the Japanese who have been constantly exposed to foreign elements.

### *a) Birth*

For the Japanese, birth, marriage, and death are regarded as the three most important occasions in human life. Of these, birth and marriage are more or les affairs of the extended family, whereas services for the dead extend beyond these boundaries to include broader social connections. When a child is born, a report of the birth is issued by the hospital or midwife. This report is to be presented within two weeks to the city, town, or village office of the father's permanent residence or present domicile, so that the child's name will be properly entered in the family register called *koseki.* The first family feast, or Oshichiya, is held on the seventh day after the birth of a child, when the parents ordinarily take their newborn to a nearby or otherwise well-known Shinto shrine for the blessing of the birth by the guardian deities who are believed to protect and ensure the well-being of the baby. However, some ardent Buddhists take their infant to a temple or their ancestor's grave, reporting and pledging to follow the teachings of the Buddha and the guidance of their ancestors.

### *b) Adulthood*

In olden times, a rite to make one's attainment of adulthood was held at home, but nowadays the coming of age is celebrated by many individual together at the public assembly hall of the community when their age of 20 is reached. From then on, one is considered an adult and given the right to vote.

Sometimes the confirmation ceremony is held at a Buddhist temple, and one is given a white cotton cloth on which is written the name of the Buddha. This ceremony is usually held at a special anniversary service or when the chief abbot is in attendance.

### *c) Marriage*

To make a marriage legal in Japan, both partners must appear at the city or ward office and fill out the necessary forms. They must be accompanied by two or more adult witnesses or present documents signed by them. The husband will then be issued a new family register as the head of a new household when he registers the marriage.



A bride and groom sanctifying their marriage before a Buddhist image by the ritual drinking of rice wine

In older times when the family system was strong, most marriages were arranged by the parents or go-betweens who assumed full responsibility for the marriage. This was especially true in the case of a daughter, for there was little occasion for young women to meet prospective husbands. Although the situation has changed nowadays, and as young people have a greater opportunity to meet each other, the old manner of arranging marriages declined rapidly.

The typical Japanese wedding is a Shinto ceremony, but there are increasing numbers of Buddhist, Christian, and secular weddings. A certificate of marriage making it legal is not obtained from the officiating priest but rather from the government office. The wedding is held at a regular Shinto shrine, Buddhist temple, or Christian church, or in front of a shrine set up in a ceremonial hall, attended by only the families and close relatives of the couple.

A Buddhist wedding ceremony is solemnly initiated with a vow to the Buddha followed by the wedding procession. After the offering of incense to the Buddha, the couple receives water ritually purified by the officiating priest, then drinks sacred rice wine offered to the Buddha from three wine cups, the bride and groom drinking three times each, symbolizing homage to the three treasures of the Buddha. This is called drinking the *san-san-kudo* (three times three equaling nine sips) pledge. The *juzu,* or Buddhist rosary, is usually given to the couple, and the wedding rings are exchanged at this time. After the pledge is confirmed by the officiating priest, the wedding is over and everyone attending retires from the ceremonial hall.

After the wedding ceremony, there is a reception for relatives and friends which is usually held in a reception hall in a hotel, a club, or the home. For the newly married couple, this is a valuable stepping-stone to future friendship and social relations.

### *d) Death*

In Japan, when there is a death, a death certificate is issued by the doctor in a hospital by filling out the proper form, with the family filling in such information as next of kin. In the case of a death at home or a traffic accident, the form is issued by an attending doctor, police officer, or police medical authority. The complete form is to be presented immediately to the city, town, or village office, which then issues a permit for the cremation or burial of the deceased 24 hours after death. Since most local government by-laws and regulations presently prohibit burial, most are cremated in Japan. The cremated remains are then interred in family graves or temple repositories.

The undertaker handles all the details of a funeral, including the preparation of the body, the location of the wake, the funeral ceremony itself, and the arrangements with the crematorium. It is customary for a family to choose one person as their representative to make the funeral arrangement with the undertaker and the priest in charge, who will explain the prices of the various services available. In general, the factors affecting the cost are the numbers of priests in attendance, the length of the service, the number of prayers offered, the complexity of the Buddhist posthumous name (called *kaimyō),* the size of the altar, and to a lesser degree, the coffin.

At the funeral service, held either at home or at the temple, all the people concerned are invited along with the priest in charge to solemnly pay their last respects to the deceased. In most cases, the funeral service takes one hour. Afterward, the coffin is carried to the hearse which proceeds to the crematorium. It takes one to one and a half hours for cremation. The relatives then gather the bones ashes and place them in a container to be buried under a tombstone or enshrined in the repository of a temple. A wooden tablet (called *ihai)* on which the Buddhist posthumous name is written is given to the bereaved family. On the 49th day after the death, a service is reverently observed at home or at a temple, for it is believed that by the 49th day the karma of the deceased takes a new form. Thereafter, a memorial service is held at home or at the temple on the anniversary of the death every year, or on the third, seventh, 13th, 17th, 23rd or 33rd year, respectively.

# 4. Buddhist Influences on Japanese Culture

## Buddhism in Daily Life

Buddhism as a living religion is not a system of dogma or temple buildings, but a way of life. It is not a mystical or speculative experience which only qualified persons can acquire but a spontaneous experience manifested in daily life and accessible to anyone, regardless of sex, position, ideology, or character. In this sense, we can see the Buddhist influence among the Japanese people in various aspects of their way of life. The following are some of the examples which can be singled out in daily life as distinctly Buddhist.

### *a) Grace at Meals*

Almost all Japanese express their thankfulness when they take meals. *"Itadakimasu"* is the word spoken before meals, meaning "With thankfulness, I accept this meal by reflecting on my own work, to see whether I deserve it." After meals, one says *"gochisōsama,"* which means "May this offering be well received to keep my body in good health and to fulfill the good wishes of all beings." Although the original meaning is completely lost and such words are automatically uttered, they convey the profound Buddhist teaching of thankfulness to all beings who give them life in this world. When ardent Buddhists say these words, they put their hands together in prayer called *gasshō.*

### *b) Daily Greetings*

The Japanese often express their gratitude by saying *"arigatō"* which literally means "I am obliged" and express their regret by saying *"sumimasen"* which means "excuse me:' One might *say "sumimasen"* having just had one's cigarette lit by a stranger, instead of *"arigatō."* Logic tells us that there is no need to feel sorry for getting what one wants, but the Japanese feel very strongly about obligations to others, and this feeling permeates their vocabulary. By saying *"sumimasen,"* one acknowledges that one has not yet properly reciprocated the other's kindness. Foreigners will encounter this sort of politeness and thoughtfulness often when they meet Japanese people.

### *c) The Game of* **Janken** *(Scissors, Paper, Rock)*

*Janken is* perhaps the most popular game which the Japanese, young and old, play when deciding a trivial issue. It is played by thrusting forth the right hand simultaneously with the other player and extending or curling the fingers and thumb to represent the shape of scissors, paper, or rock. Scissors defeat paper because a pair of scissors can cut paper; rock beats scissors because scissors cannot cut rock; and paper defeats rock because it can be wrapped around a rock. This game conveys the profound Buddhist teaching of interdependence and relativeness.

### *d)* **Furoshiki** *(Japanese Wrapping Cloth)*

*Furoshiki,* a handy piece of cloth for wrapping up and carrying almost anything, is used by the Japanese in their everyday life. A square piece of any fabric will make *a furoshiki* which can be folded up and put into one's pocket or bag when not in use. It can also be used as a rope when twisted. Likewise, Japanese socks, *obi* waist sashes, kimono, wooden clogs, or slippers have flexible usage and can be made to fit almost anyone. Such multipurposefulness of things Japanese reminds one of the Mahayana Buddhist teaching of no outer-limitation or extension.

### *e) Daruma Dolls*

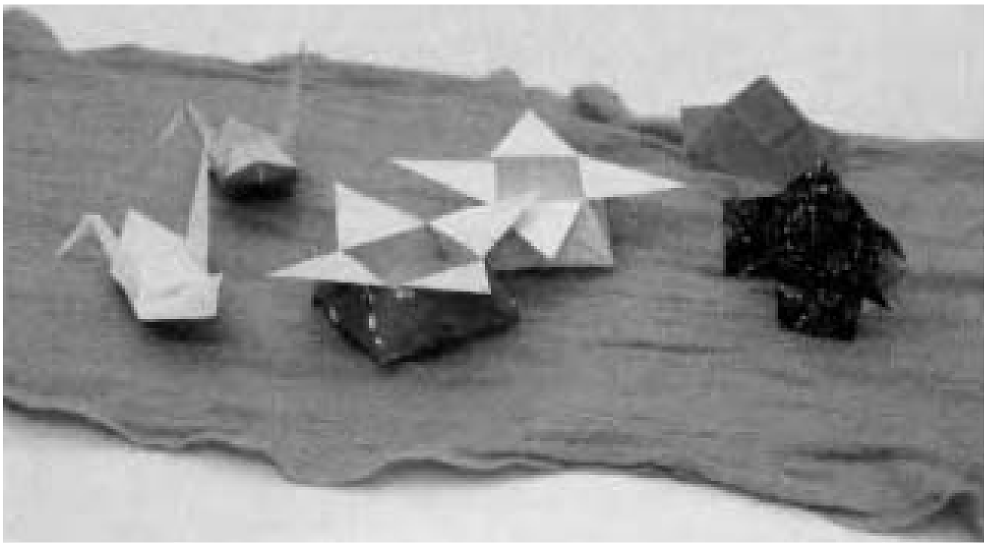


DARUMA DOLLS SERVE AS GOOD LUCK CHARMS

The Japanese are very fond of the stout and round Daruma dolls which always rebound upright. These Daruma dolls are symbols of good luck and are usually purchased during the New Year's festival with their eyes not yet painted in. One eye is painted at the time of praying for a particular wish and if the wish comes true, the second eye is painted in. In this way, the Daruma's eyes are finally opened. The dolls come in all

sizes and are made after the famous Indian Buddhist monk, Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism in China who is reputed to have lost his legs after sitting for eight years in meditation. The popular saying, "stumbling seven times and righting oneself eight like Daruma;" is attributed to the legend of Bodhidharma, who endured all kinds of hardships and never gave up.

### *f)* **Origami** *(Folding Paper Figures)*



In origami many shapes can be made with a single sheet of paper

Unlike Japanese painting, gardens, or flower arrangement, origami follows a precise and determined pattern governed by the mechanics of folding and by the shape which is to be constructed. Various paper models of cranes, boats, flowers, desks, boxes, and trays can be made by folding colored paper. The design derives from the intricate pattern of lines and paper surfaces meeting at various angles to form an object. Although paper itself is perishable, the idea of immortalizing such an ephemeral substance by universalizing its shape is distinctly Buddhist.

### *g)* **Furo** *(The Japanese Bath)*

Perhaps no other people are as fond of taking baths as the Japanese. They take a bath at least once a day, usually right before going to bed. While the custom of taking a bath properly started early in Japanese history for reasons of health and sanitation, it was given additional impetus after the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. In Buddhism, cleanliness is next to godliness, which connected bathing with ablution and purification. It is no doubt that the abundance of hot springs in the volcanic islands of Japan encouraged this custom of taking baths.

# 5. Major Annual Buddhist Festivals

## Annual Buddhist Events in Japan

Below is a list of the annual events held at most Buddhist temples in Japan, followed by a short explanation of each event.

| | |
|---|---|
| January 1st: | Shushō Service (New Year's Day) |
| February 3rd: | Setsubun Service (The Heralding of Spring) |
| February 15th: | Nehan Service (The Buddha's Nirvana) |
| March 21st and September 23rd*: | Higan Service (Spring and Fall Equinox) |
| April 8th: | Hana Matsuri (The Birth of the Buddha) |
| July 15th: | O-Bon (Buddhist Memorial Day) |
| Summer: | Segaki Service (Buddhist Thanksgiving) |
| December 8th: | Jōdō Service (The Buddha's Enlightenment) |
| December 31st: | Joya Service (New Year's Eve) |

(**Note:* Spring and Fall Equinox Days vary from year to year according to the revolution of the earth around the sun.)

### *a) Shushō Service (New Year's Day)*

On New Year's Day, the average Japanese person makes it a practice to wake up early and, if possible, watch the first sunrise. A spiced rice wine *(toso)* and pounded rice cakes *(mochi)* are served at breakfast for the first three days as a means of praying for longevity and health. One pays a visit to a nearby, or otherwise well-known, Buddhist temple or shrine wearing formal clothes and makes courtesy calls on friends and relatives.

The Shushō New Year's Service is held with solemnity at a Buddhist temple for a safe passage in the coming year. In 2003, 86 million Japanese people visited Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines from New Year's Eve through January 3rd. This figure is 1,310,000 higher than for the comparable period a year ago. The Meiji Jingū shrine in Tokyo was the most crowded with an estimated three million visitors, followed by the Naritasan Shinshō-ji temple in Chiba Prefecture.

### *b) Setsubun Service (The Heralding of Spring)*

On February 3rd, the day before the beginning of spring according to the Japanese lunar calendar, the Setsubun Service involving the throwing of beans is held at homes, temples, and shrines during the daytime. On this day, roasted beans are placed in square wooden containers for measuring rice and thrown at doorways and in rooms with the participants shouting, "Out with the devil, in with good fortune!"

At major temples and shrines, the task of scattering the beans goes to celebrated persons such as politicians or movie stars born in whatever zodiacal year it happens to be. Hundreds of thousands of well-wishers sharing this happy occasion attend.

### *c) Nehan Service (The Buddha's Nirvana)*

Unlike the Theravadins in Southeast Asian countries, who celebrate the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and nirvana at the same time on Wesak Day in May, Japanese Buddhists celebrate these events separately according to the Mahayana tradition. February 15th is believed to be the day of *nehan (parinirvāna),* on which Guatama Buddha passed away from this world about 2,500 years ago at Kushinara, India.

At a Buddhist temple, the Nehan Service is held with a hanging scroll depicting the Buddha's passing away into nirvana surrounded with many disciples, and even animals, weeping over his death.

### *d) Higan Service (Spring and Fall Equinox)*

Higan is the Buddhist festival which falls in March and September for a week. The middle of the week is the vernal and autumnal equinox day, respectively, meaning that on this day the length of time for day and night is equal. This heralds the new season, as expressed by the Japanese phrase, "The heat or cold extends until Higan." We find in it renewed hope after long and weary days of cold or heat.

In all Buddhist temples, the Higan Service is celebrated to remind us of the impermanence of life. Higan means "the other shore" and seems to be derived from the Sanskrit word *pāramitā.* It indicates "the state in which one has gone to the other shore after practicing the six *pāramitās,* namely the virtues of giving, morality, patience, energy, meditation, and wisdom. The other shore symbolizes nirvana in contrast to this shore, the mundane world of samsara."

The celebration of the Higan Service is believed to have started

in Japan some 1,200 years ago. According to historical records, in the 25th year of the Enryaku era (A.D. 806), the Japanese government ordered the priests of the Kokubun-ji temples, established by the government in every province throughout Japan, to recite the *Diamond Sutra* at this time of year. During this period, it is customary for Buddhists throughout the country to visit temples and graves. They bring flowers, incense, water or their favorite food to be to be offered to the deceased and greet them with refreshed minds to report on their well-being. At this time also, devout Buddhists begin a pilgrimage to various temples designated as stations. Such visits originated with Kōbō Daishi Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon school, on Shikoku island where a large number of pilgrims can still be seen journeying from one temple to another. Dressed in white, they make the journey ringing handbells and chanting sacred verses of a sutra in chorus.

***e) Hana Matsuri (The Birth of the Buddha)***

Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus, is the most joyous day for the Christian. Likewise, Hana Matsuri (Flower Festival), celebrating the birth of Gautama Buddha, is the happiest day for the Japanese



CHILDREN BLESSING THE STATUETTE OF THE NEWBORN SHAKYAMUNI WITH SWEET TEA WATER IN CELEBRATION OF HIS BIRTH

Buddhist. On this day, the Kambutsu Service is held at the temple to celebrate the Buddha's birth, with a flower-covered shrine set up in the assembly hall.

In China, the first celebration of the Buddha's birth is said to have taken place on April 8th in the latter Chao dynasty (A.D. 319–355) and in Japan it was first held in 660 at the Gankō-ji temple near Nara by order of Empress Suiko. On this day, the statue of the infant Buddha is placed in a flower-decorated shrine symbolizing the beautiful Lumbini garden where the Buddha was born. Sometimes it is carried on a white elephant in a parade suggesting the elephant that brought the Buddha from heaven to the womb of his mother, Queen Māyā. People gather around the shrine and pour sweet tea on the statue of the infant Buddha as a substitute for the nectar which is said to have been sprinkled by celestial beings at the time of his birth. The service is therefore called the Kambutsu (Anointing the Buddha) Service.

### *f) O-Bon (Buddhist Memorial Day)*

The word O-Bon is an abbreviation of Ura-Bon from the Sanskrit *ullambana* which literally means "hung upside down." It implies the terrible suffering which is felt, physically or spiritually, when one is hung upside down.

Legend tells us that in India there was a man called Maudgalyayana (Mokuren in Japanese), who became on of the Buddha's disciples and gained deep insight into the nature of existence. To his surprise he found his dead mother, thin and desiccated, in the state of *ullambana* yearning for food and water. He immediately brought some to her, but she could not partake of them because at the moment she was about to consume them, they turned into fire. The astonished son hurried back to the Buddha to recount what happened and asked why she had to suffer so. The Buddha quietly answered that it was inevitable, for no one had taken care of her before and after her death. Maudgalyana felt contrition for the selfishness he had had before he became the Buddha's disciple, for he had been egocentric and taking care of no one but himself.

When Maudgalyayana begged the Buddha for a way to rescue his mother, the Buddha advised him to summon all the monks nearby and hold a memorial service for her by offering food, clothing,



VISITING GRAVES DURING O-BON IS A REGULAR CUSTOM FOR MANY

and other necessities to the monks and the whole congregation. The Buddha further advised that July 15th would be the best time to hold the service, as all of the monks came out of their summer retreat on this day, spiritually cleansed and refreshed. The disciple was very much relieved and held the service as advised by the Buddha and finally saved his mother from hunger and isolation in the other world.

Usually O-Bon services take place for four days beginning from July 13th. They are conducted by a priest in front of a special altar in Buddhist homes, where spirits of ancestors are believed to visit during this season. The first day of O-Bon is called Mukae-Bon or the welcoming day and the last day is called Okuri-Bon or the farewell day. On the eve of the Mukae-Bon, people go to the graveyard carrying beautiful lanterns and welcome the spirits of their ancestors back to their home. Horses and bullocks made of cucumbers and eggplants with legs of dried grass are prepared in front of the tombstone for them to mount. At home, people enjoy a happy reunion with the spirits by holding a special feast with cakes, fresh fruit, and vegetables.

On the last day of O-Bon, people send off the spirits in a miniature boat (called *shōryōbune)* filled with all kinds of foods or with a lighted lantern. It is said that the boats will cross the ocean and reach the other shore safely so that until the next O-Bon, the spirits need never feel hungry nor lonesome in the other world.

### *g) Segaki Service (Buddhist Thanksgiving)*

Segaki literally means the offering to those who are in desperate need. The Segaki Service usually falls on the day when all the members of the temple gather together to offer food or money to those who are in need.

According to the *Mahāparinirvāna Sutra,* Ananda, one of the Buddhas disciples, was in agony when a devil appeared and predicted that he would die in a few days. Astonished, Ananda asked the devil if there was any way to escape his fate, and the devil replied that he would be safe if he offered food and propounded the noble teaching. According to the sutra, he did so and was saved. This teaches the importance of giving to others who are in desperate need. This thanksgiving service is sometimes held at the time of the memorial services for the deceased, so that the attendants may be reminded of giving something to others besides their own ancestors.

### *h) Jōdō Service (The Buddha's Enlightenment)*

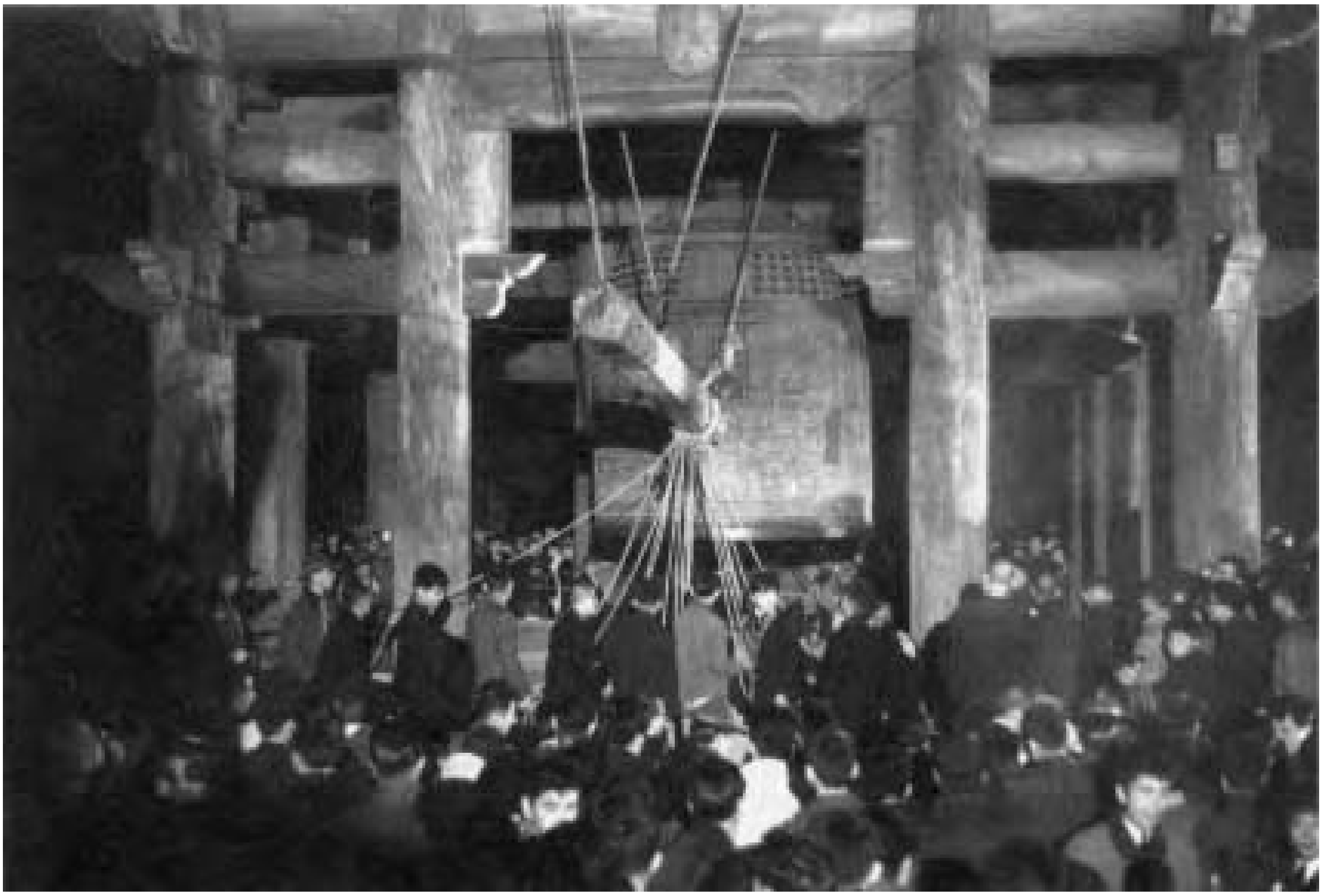
The Jōdō Service falls on December 8th, the day on which Guatama Buddha was believed to have achieved full enlightened under the Bodhi tree at Buddhagaya and became the Buddha, the Supremely Awakened One.

After Gautama left his father's palace, he spent six long years in search of truth. He visited various ascetics and mystics who were detached from this world and exercised austere discipline. They taught the spiritual supremacy over materialism by tormenting their bodies to the point of attaining the highest state of mind, where they would become one with God. So too did Gautama, yet in his pain and hunger he could not gain anything but the miserable existence of his mind and body. He wandered around and more intensely sought a solution which could satisfy him. However, he failed to find any solution in the existing ideas and exercises.

When Gautama reached the river Nairanjana, he found a good

place in the forest for meditation. After he sat down there, darkness descended all around him and Mara, the master of sensual pleasure, tempted him severeal times to give up his austere discipline. Gautama struggled and finally drove Mara away, but fainted because of hunger and fatigue. When he awoke, he saw a country girl, Sujāta, passing by and accepted a bowl of curds from her, for he realized that a healthy mind could not be sustained in a body that was weak and ill. He went to bathe in a nearby river and sat in meditation under the Bodhi tree, strengthened and refreshed. He deeply recognized at this moment that neither materialism (self-indulgence) nor the extreme of spirituality (self-mortification) is the way of deliverance from the fetters of this world, but rather the Middle Way, the balancing and transcendence of both materialism and spirituality. He finally found this way at the age of 35 and was born anew from that time on. He came out of the forest fully enlightened and began to preach what he had found.

The Jōdō Service celebrating Gautama's enlightenment is held at Buddhist temples or public halls, reminding us of its significance in the contemporary world.



Ringing the bell on New Year's Eve lends a poetic touch at year end

### *i) Joya Service (New Year's Eve)*

It is common practice to eat buckwheat noodles on New Year's Eve. One theory is that this custom began with the hope that eating noodles at the turn of the year would extend one's life like the long length of the noodles. Another theory is that it originated with merchants who were so busy collecting bills on this day that they ate noodles, since it takes little time to prepare and eat them.

At the stroke of midnight, the sound of bells ringing 108 times is heard from the nearby temples or is sometimes even broadcast. This symbolizes the expulsion of the 108 human defilements believed to have accumulated in the past year. Sometimes the bell tower of the temple is surrounded by hundreds of thousands of people who wish to hear the bells and wait for the coming New Year. Many people stay awake this night and, as soon as they hear the toll of the temple bells, start out on their New Year's pilgrimage to specific temple or shrines.

# Part III

## *Toward the Future*

# What Does Buddhism Contribute to the World Peace?

## Importance of Avoiding Polarization

We are usually inclined to extremes in our ways of life: intellectualism or materialism, absolutism or relativism, eternalism or nihilism, ecclesiasticism or secularism, and so on. This kind of polarization seems to be inevitable. However, in Buddhism it is taught that this should be avoided as much as possible; it recommends us to hit the Middle Point. In this way, what we are now totally depends on what we think and do, according to the Law of Cause and Effect.

It seems that people in the West fall into this pitfall of polarization; modernization and secularization are prevalent everywhere, which have lead to the sickness and degeneration of minds and bodies, and to the destruction of the social and natural environment of the world. In the 19th century, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stated "God is dead;" and I assume that in the 20th century, human beings died. The political, economic, racial, and religious strife between the people of monotheistic religions and their nations have become ever more intense, and there seems to be no remedy or solution for the stability of the world.

Then, what awaits us? Are we only awaiting the total destruction of the world, as the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington predicted in his book The *Clash of Civilizations?* We cannot go back to the past, but we can learn some hints from the past history of Japan.

## Prince Shōtoku's Emphasis on Harmony

In the sixth century, Buddhism was first introduced to Japan and soon afterward became the state religion. Prince Regent Shōtoku promulgated the 17-Article Constitution, where he emphasized "harmony" as a priority over all other virtues. Why? Japan is often thought of as an undivided nation of a homogeneous people, but it is not true. Like the native Americans of the United States, the Ainu are the indigenous people of Japan, and the majority of present day Japanese consist of different ethnic groups, which migrated from the Eurasian Continent and the South Pacific from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 200. After they

settled in Japan, incessant warring took place and Prince Shōtoku learned the importance of living together in harmony and peace. In Article 10 of the Constitution, he proclaims;

> Let us cease from wrath and refrain from angry looks. Nor let us be resentful when others differ from us. For all people have hearts and each heart has its own leanings. Their right is our wrong, and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they unquestionably fools. Both of us are simply ordinary people. How can any person lay down a rule by which to distinguish right from wrong? For we are all, one with another, wise and foolish, like a ring which has no end.

## Coexistence of Different Beliefs

Although this constitution was based on the teachings of Buddhism, Prince Shōtoku never rejected the heterogeneous element of traditional Shinto, the folk religion, which was prevalent in those days in Japan. Later on, both Buddhism and traditional Shinto existed side by side or coexisted harmoniously until the time when the Meiji government abolished this dual system of Buddhist and Shinto syncretism in 1868. This was due in part to the influence of the monotheistic religions of the West during the modernization of Japan.

When we look at the present world crisis confronting us, there seem to be many problems to be solved politically, economically, socially, and in the realm of religion. No matter how much we try our best to compromise, forgive and reconcile with each other, unless we recognize and repent our ego-centric tendencies by realizing the Oneness of All Life, we shall never solve the problems now or in the future.

In 1953, Chemical-biologists James Watson and Francis Crick of the Cold Spring Harbor Institute discovered the structure of DNA and won the Nobel Prize in the field of medical science and physiology. They revealed that irrespective of whether one is a human being or of other species, there are similar kinds of traces of DNA, although they differ with each other by chance and conditions. If this is true, how stupid are we to compete with, deceive, fight, rob, and kill each other in the name of a God who is nothing but the product of man-made ideologies!

## Impermanence of All Material Objects

All our belongings, our body, property, fame, etc. are nothing but the temporary borrowing of things from the world. We all are members of the world family.

The Buddhist poet Misuzu Kaneko once sang;

Out of the mud blooms the lotus
It's not the lotus that does it
Out of the egg comes the chick
It's not the chick that does it
These are things I've realized
And that, too, I didn't do.

Since the Saddam Hussein regime's surrender, counter attacks by remaining supporters of Hussein intensified, which in turn created the crime of domestic terrorism and criminalized any act that "appears" to them to be intimidation.

## Acceptance of the Oneness of Life

Irrespective of whether the West changes its attitudes toward the Muslim world and diligently seeks to redress the legitimate grievances of Muslim people, and the Muslim world sets aside its embitterment and forgives the West for the injustices of the past, unless both sides deeply reflect upon and repent their ignorance, and stand on the same ground of the Oneness of all life, there will be no cessation of battle with each other.

In this sense, a social critic named Davis Morse once said in the *Daily Yomiuri* (an English-language newspaper published in Japan), "At its core, the practice of a true religion of any kind should entail comfort for the aggrieved and brokenhearted; binding of the wounded; empowerment of the destitute; a bold declaration of beliefs to those who are willing to listen, without coercion; and an active tolerance for adherents of all other faiths to live out their creeds in a similar manner. Then and only then can the wall of intolerance be ripped asunder."

It is a self-evident truth that revenge is not a final solution for the settlement of dispute or battle for those who are involved in it, and yet because of their ignorance they are doomed to receive counter attacks with each other. The following is such a revenge story which

has been told in Japan since the Edo period (1603–1867). The Japanese novelist Kan Kikuchi (1888–1948) wrote *Onshū no Kanatani* (Beyond love and hate), based on this legend and published from Shunyōdo Publishing Co. in Tokyo in 1919. I believe it can give us some hint for the solution of the incessant fighting which we encounter now in the world. It can be summarized as follows:

### "Beyond Love and Hate"

Once upon a time, Ichikurō, a servant samurai for the Lord Saburobei, fell in love with his master's mistress and his secret love affair was detected, and he was about to be executed by his master. However, before the approaching death, Ichikurō lost his relationship with his master, he only recognized his lord as his assailant, whom he had served up to that moment, a blood-thirsty brute threatening his life by sword. He instantly made up his mind to assume the offensive and killed his master by mistake.

Ichikurō fled his master's house in Edo, present day Tokyo, and soon pinched for money, he became a bandit, killing people in desperation. However, one day when he visited the temple in Ōgaki, he was in the grip of deep pangs of conscience. He confessed all his past sins to the resident priest Myohen. Persuaded by the priest, he resolved to become a priest and was given a Buddhist name Ryōkai. His subsequent life was one of strenuous efforts in pursuit of the compassionate teaching of Buddhism for himself and for others.

After a while, Ryōkai, formerly Ichinosuke, left the temple and as a wandering priest he reached Yabakei Gorge in Kyūshū, the southern tip of Japan. When he heard that the villagers there had difficulties in crossing the mountain, he determined to dig a tunnel for their convenience. The villagers felt sorry for his vain effort and yet as year followed year he continued digging, and by the end of the ninth year the cave he had bored measured 130 feet in length from the entrance. For the first time, the villagers realized that his undertaking might be possible.

By this time, Jitsunosuke, the son of Saburobei who was killed by Ichikurō, was searching for his father's enemy for vengeance. In those days in Japan, family vendettas were a fairly common practice (although it was declared illegal in 1837). When Jitsunosuke went to

Kyūshū, he happened to overhear the conversation of a fellow pilgrim about the samurai who had killed his master in Edo and fled to the pilgrim's village. Jitsunosuke all but jumped for joy on hearing this and he rushed to the village.

## The climax to "Beyond Love and Hate"

Following is the climactic scene John Bester translated from Kikuchi's book into English *The Realm Beyond,* published by Hara Publishing Co. in Tokyo in 1964:

> Jitsunosuke finally discovered his life-long enemy Ichikurō, now the Buddhist priest Ryōkai, who just emerged from the cave. Ichikurō's flesh had fallen away to reveal the bones beneath the skin, and his legs below the knees were so ulcerated that it was impossible to look at them without flinching. Ichikurō frankly admitted that he had killed Jitsunosuke's father and then fled. Jitsunosuke determined to kill him, saying, "Close on ten years of hunting you nationwide have I spent in the hope of killing you. Come and fight. There is no way out now!" Ichikurō said, "Jitsunosuke, kill me, pray. Wretched that I am, I planned, as you may have heard, to bore this tunnel, I shall have died happy."
>
> Faced with this half-dead old priest, Jitsunosuke felt the hatred that he had cherished toward his father's foe gradually waning. Just then, five or six stonemasons came running out of the cave, and threw themselves before him to shield Jitsunosuke. They begged Jitsunosuke not to kill Ichikurō until the tunnel was completed. Looking from Ichikurō to the group and back, Jitsunosuke declared, "In consideration of Ryōkai's priestly habit, I grant your request. Yet mark me, I shall not forget your promise!"
>
> A few days later, Jitsunosuke heard Ichikurō's powerful strokes of the hammer shaking the cave as he entered it, and felt, he must wait with good grace the completion of the work and fulfillment of the promise. Soon after this, the form of Jitsunosuke was to be seen among the stonemasons working on the tunnel. Realizing that Ichikurō would neither run away nor hide, Jitsunosuke determined to delay the day when his

life work should be accomplished. Yet even so, rather than stand by idly, it was better to lend all his strength to the great undertaking and thereby shorten, by however little, the period before the day of revenge should come. So himself joined the ranks of the stonemasons, and began to wield his hammer with them.

Finally, the tunnel was completed. Hand in hand, the two enemies sat sobbing in joy. But, soon Ichikurō drew away, "Come, Jitsunosuke" he cried. "The day of our promise has arrived. Kill me! If I die in such religious ecstasy, it is certain that I shall be reborn in the Pure land. Tomorrow, the stonemasons will stop you. Come, kill me!" His hoarse voice reverberated throughout the tunnel. Yet Jitsunosuke continued to sit before Ichikurō, arms folded, sobbing. The sight of this withered old priest, crying with joy welling up from deep in his heart, made all idea of killing him as an enemy unthinkable. His own breast was full, not with the desire for revenge, but with wonder and emotion at the mighty achievement that had been worked by the two arms of a feeble human being. Crawling toward Ichikurō, he took the old priest's hands in his own once more. Everything forgotten, they sobbed together with an emotion too deep for words.

## Understanding of Oneness Eases Hostilities

In this way, the rivals would recognize and share the same Oneness of their lives in such a crucial moment. Likewise, the people of rival states, ethnic groups of religions should be compelled to cooperate when they are in the same life-and-death situation.

When we look around, we are often surprised to see that many people regard others with hostility on account of clashes of interest, and this feeling is often mutual. Wars and international disputes reflect this on a large scale. In the end, everyone suffers in one way or another. How foolish human beings are! These hostilities seem to originate with our thinking that we and others have others have mutually exclusive existence. Unless we understand that all human beings are merely branches and leaves growing from the same root, I am afraid that disputes will never disappear from the world.

## Discrimination Arises from Attachments

According to Buddhism, particularly in Japanese Buddhism, our world is nothing but the manifestation of the Oneness of Life, where all beings, animals, or inanimate, exist interdependently. People impose distinctions and separate what is mine from what is not mine. This discrimination arises from an attachment in man called blind craving that differentiates Oneness from the plurality of Manyness. Consequently, conflicts, misunderstandings, and frictions arise within people themselves. From the blind craving comes the conscious self, affirming its fundamental selfishness. Since people go against Oneness by responding to the blind craving within themselves, they create an illusory world of Manyness, which is not the real world, but a world created in their own imagination.

Therefore, Buddhism refutes such petty ego-centric vengeance, nationalism, patriotism, imperialism, and unilateralism. It rejects the individualistic and rationalistic habit of separation and confrontation; instead it teaches that our true nature is empty, dynamic, infinite, unified, pervading, and inherent. I believe that Buddhism must be able to address the present conditions of our societies and time so that it may contribute, though in a small way, to the world crisis which we are confronting now.

# Part IV

## *Appendixes*

# 1. Introducing the Japan Buddhist Federation (JBF)

According to recent national census conducted in 2003, there are approximately 96 million Buddhists belonging to over 77,000 temples and associations. The Japan Buddhist Federation (JBF) is the only federation of traditional Buddhist denominations in Japan. It consists of all the major denominations and sects (including the 58 main denominations), prefectural Buddhist associations, and promotional Buddhist organizations. The members of our affiliated 103 denominations and associations account for more than 90 percent of all Buddhist organizations in Japan.

Our federation has its origins in the Buddhist Interfaith Organization, founded in 1900 to oppose the control of religion by the Japanese government. The Japanese Buddhist Federation was created in 1957 out of the Greater Japan Buddhist Association and the Japan Buddhist Confederation.

The organization of our federation consists of a board of directors, an executive board, and a board of trustees, which are responsible for the administration of the federation. The General Secretariat is responsible for running daily activities, and there are special committees to review specific tasks. These functions support various activities for the entire Japanese Buddhist community.

Our activities can be divided into two parts: 1) daily activities for liaison and information, exchange and study, and promotion of mutual friendship; and 2) assisting people in local communities in the event of disasters. Furthermore, we have joined with Shinto, Christian, and New Religions federations to form the Japanese Religious League, maintaining contact with the representative denominations of the Buddhist community and participating in negotiations with government offices and official institutes. In addition, we serve as the Japanese representative to the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), working as a liaison for international activities and exchange with Buddhists from other countries.

The Japan Buddhist Federation has been focusing its activities on the following projects:

### *a) Endorsing "Freedom of Religion" and "Separation of Religion and State"*

In order to endorse the principles of "Freedom of Religion" and "Separation of Religion and State" as guaranteed by the Japanese Constitution, the federation is actively engaged in lobbying the Japanese government and political parties in regard to such issues as the revision of the Religious Corporation Law, the establishment of the Information Disclosure Law, and the maintenance of the non-tax principle for religious corporations.

### *b) Addressing Contemporary Issues*

Contemporary issues that society demands to be addressed by the Buddhist community include the effects of the expanding multimedia, the medical ethics of transplanting organs from the clinically brain-dead, and the meaning of the funeral in modern society. The Japan Buddhist Federation provides various opinions and viewpoints on these issues through seminars, the federation's monthly journal called the *Zenbutsu,* and on the federation's website to increase the knowledge and awareness of the general public.

### *c) Campaigning to Eliminate "Buraku Discrimination" & Promote Human Rights*

The Japan Buddhist Federation is pursuing the elimination of "Buraku Discrimination" and the promotion of human rights by exchanging information on progressive actions with other affiliated associations and organizing meetings to heighten awareness on these issues. The federation is also continuing its investigations to make explicit the connection between the Buddhist doctrine and discrimination.

### *d) Restoring the Maya Devi Temple at Lumbini*

Ten years have passed since the plans were first laid to restore the Maya Devi Temple at Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautama Siddhartha. Now finally the project has arrived at its final phase. The archeologists dispatched from Japan have finished their appraisal of the site and the coordination with Nepal under the auspices of UNESCO is underway for beginning the reconstruction.

### *e) World Fellowship of Buddhists*

The World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) was established in 1950 to promote international exchange and friendly relations in the Buddhist community, to spread Buddhism, and to contribute to World peace. The headquarters is located at Bangkok in Thailand and its affiliate members include 135 regional centers in 38 countries throughout the world.

The General Conference, the most important venue for decision-making within the WFB, has been held in every two or three years since the establishment of WFB. Its organizations and activities are reviewed and the agendas and schedules of future activities are decided at the General Conference. JBF has hosted the WFB General Conference twice, once in 1952 and again in 1978.

Japan Buddhist Federation

| | |
|---|---|
| Address: | Meisho Kaikan Hall 2F, 4–7–4, Shiba-koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0011, Japan |
| Phone: | +81–3–3437–9275 Fax: +81–3–3437–3260 |
| E-mail: | info@jbf.ne.jp |
| URL: | http://www.jbf.ne.jp |
| Access: | Ten-minute walk from the Onarimon or Shiba-Koen stations on the subway Toei-Mita line. Five-minute walk from the Akabane-bashi station on the subway Toei-Oedo line. Fifteen-minute walk from the Daimon station on the subway Toei-Asakusa line. Twenty-minute walk from the Hamamatsucho station on the JR Line. |

# 2. JBF-Affiliated Organizations

## Buddhist Denominations and Sects

### (a) Tendai Denomination

Kinpusen
Kodo Kyodan Buddhist Fellowship
Myoken Shu
Nenpo Shinkyo
The Tendai Buddhist Administration Headquarters
Tendai Jimon Shu
Tendai Shinsei Shu
Shitennoji Temple (Wa-shu)
Shokannon Shu

### (b) Shingon Denomination

The Buzan Denomination of Shingon Buddhism
Koyasan Shingon Mission
Shigisan Shingon Shu
Shingi Shingon Shu
Shingon Sanpo Shu
Shingon Shu Chizan-ha
Shingon Shu Daigo-ha
Shingon Shu Daikakuji-ha
Shingon Shu Inunaki-ha
Shingon Shu Kokubunji-ha
Shingon Shu Nakayamadera-ha
Shingon Shu Omuro-ha
Shingon-Shu Sennyuji-ha
Shingon Shu Yamashina-ha
Shingon Shu Zentsuji Sect
The Sumadera school of the Shingon sect of Buddhism
Toji Shingon Shu

### (c) Jodo Denominations

Jodo Shu
Jodo Shu Seizan-Zenrinji-ha
The Seizan Fukakusa Branch of Jodo-sect
Seizan Jodo Shu
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha
Shinshu Bukkoji-ha
Shinshu Kibe-ha

Shinshu Kosho-ha
Shinshu Otani-ha
Shinshu Takada-ha
Jishu (JI-sect)
Yuzunenbutu-shu

### (d) Zen Denominations

Administrative Headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism
Obaku Shu
Rinzai Shu Engakuji-ha
Rinzai Shu Kenchoji-ha
Rinzai Shu Myoshinji-ha
Rinzai Shu Nanzenji-ha
Rinzai Shu Shokokuji-ha
Rinzai Shu Tofukuji-ha

### (e) Nichiren Denomination

Hokke Shu Honmon-ryu
Hokke Shu Jinmon-ryu
Hokke Shu Shinmon-ryu
Honmon Butsuryu Shu
Honmon Hokke Shu
Kenpon Hokke Shu
Nichiren Shu

### (f) Denominations of the "Six Schools" of Nara Buddhism

Hosso Sect
Kegon Shu
Ritsu Shu
Shingon Ritsu Shu
Shotoku Shu

## Other Affiliated Organizations

**Prefectural Buddhist Associations** (listed north to south)

Hokkaido Bukkyokai Renmei
Aomori-ken Bukkyokai
Iwate-ken Bukkyokai (Iwate Buddhist Society)
Fukushima-ken Bukkyokai
Gunma-ken Bukkyo Rengokai
Tochigi-ken Bukkyokai
Ibaraki-ken Bukkyokai
Saitama-ken Bukkyokai

Chiba-ken Bukkyokai
Tokyo-to Bukkyo Rengokai
Kanagawa-ken Bukkyokai
Niigata-ken Bukkyokai
Ishikawa-ken Bukkyokai
Fukui-ken Bukkyokai
Yamanashi-ken Bukkyokai
Nagano-ken Bukkyokai
Gifu-ken Bukkyokai
Shizuoka-ken Bukkyokai
Aichi-ken Bukkyokai
Shiga-ken Bukkyokai
Kyoto Bukkyokai (Kyoto Buddhist Association)
Kyoto-fu Bukkyo Rengokai
Osaka-fu Bukkyokai
Hyogo-ken Bukkyokai
Wakayama-ken Bukkyokai
Shimane-ken Bukkyokai
Okayama-ken Bukkyokai
Tottori-ken Bukkyo Rengokai
Kagawa-ken Bukkyokai
Tokushima-ken Bukkyo Rengokai
Ehime-ken Bukkyokai
Kochi-ken Bukkyokai
Fukuoka-ken Bukkyo Rengokai
Nagasaki Bukkyo Rengokai
Miyazaki-ken Bukkyo Rengokai
Okinawa-ken Bukkyokai

## Independent Buddhist Organizations

All Japan Buddhist Women's Association
All Japan Young Buddhist Association (JYBA)
Buddhist Association of Information and Mercy
Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai
(Society for the Promotion of Buddhism)
Bukkyo Shinko Zaidan
International Buddhist Brotherhood Association
Japan Buddhist Nursery and Kindergarten Association
Nihon Bukkyo Sangokai
Tokyo Buddhist Club

# 3. Buddhist Universities, Societies, Institutes

## Universities and Colleges (listed alphabetically)

### Aichi Gakuin University

12, Araike, Iwasaki-cho, Nisshin, Aichi Pref. 470–0195, Japan
Phone: +81–561–73–1111
Fax: +81–561–72–8422
http://www.aichi-gakuin.ac.jp/index-e-m.html
E-mail: kohoka@dpc.aichi-gakuin.ac.jp

### Ashikaga Institute of Technology

268–1, Omae-cho, Ashikaga, Tochigi Pref. 326–8558, Japan
Phone: +81–284–62–0605
Fax: +81–284–62–0976
http://www.ashitech.ac.jp/
E-mail: aithome@ashitech.ac.jp

### Bukkyo University

96, Kitahananobo-cho, Murasakino, Kita-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 603–8301, Japan
Phone: +81–75–491–2141
http://www.bukkyo-u.ac.jp/
E-mail: mmc-info@bukkyo-u.ac.jp

### Bunkyo University

3–2–17, Hatanodai, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 142-0064, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3783–5511
Fax: +81–3–3783–8300
http://www.bunkyo.ac.jp/stf/kkokusai/english/e-index.htm
E-mail: interex@hatanodai.bunkyo.ac.jp

### Chikushi Jogakuen University

2–12–1, Ishizaka, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Pref. 818–0118, Japan
Phone: +81–92–925–3511
http://www.chikushi.ac.jp/clg/departments/index.html

### Doho University

7–1, Inabaji-cho, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya, Aichi Pref. 453–8540, Japan
Phone: +81–52–411–1113
Fax: +81–52–411–0333
http://www.doho.ac.jp/~univ/index.html

### Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University

2078, Takakuwa, Yanaizu-cho, Hashima-gun, Gifu Pref. 501-6122, Japan
Phone: +81–582–79–0804
http://www.shotoku.ac.jp/top.shtml

## Hanazono University
8–1, Tubonouchi-cho, Nishinokyo, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 604–8456, Japan
Phone: +81–75–811–5181
http://www.hanazono.ac.jp/top.html
E-mail: soumu@hanazono.ac.jp

## International Buddhist University
3–2–1, Gakuenmae, Habikino, Osaka Pref. 583–8501, Japan
Phone: +81–729–56–3181
http://www.shitennoji.ac.jp/ibu/english/ibuindex.html
E-mail: kouhou@shitennoji.ac.jp

## Komazawa University
1–23–1, Komazawa, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 154–8525, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3702–9730
http://www.komazawa-u.ac.jp/english/home/index.html
E-mail: kokusaicenter@komazawa-u.ac.jp

## Koyasan University
Koyasan, Koysan-cho, Ito-gun, Wakayama Pref. 648–0211, Japan
Phone: +81–7365–6–2921
http://www.koyasan-u.ac.jp/
E-mail: shomu@koyasan-u.ac.jp

## Kurashiki Sakuyo University
3515, Nagao, Tamashima, Kurashiki, Okayama Pref. 710–0292, Japan
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Fax: +81–86–523–0811
http://www.ksu.ac.jp/
E-mail: webmaster@ksu.ac.jp

## Kyoto Koka Women's University
39, Noda-cho, Nishikyogoku, Ukyo-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 615-0861, Japan
Phone: +81–75–325–5221
Fax: +81–75–322–0336
http://www.koka.ac.jp/2003/
E-mail: hkk@mail.koka.ac.jp

## Kyoto Women's University
35, Kitahiyoshi-cho, Imakumano, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 605–0926, Japan
Phone: +81–75–531–7054
http://www.kyoto-wu.ac.jp/index-e.html
E-mail: webmaster@kyoto-wu.ac.jp

## Musashino University
1–1–20, Shin-machi, Nishitokyo-shi, Tokyo 202–0023, Japan

Phone: +81–424–68–3111
http://www.musashino-wu.ac.jp/english/index.html
E-mail: soEugou@musashino-u.ac.jp

## Nagoya College of Music

7–1, Inabaji-cho, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya, Aichi Pref. 453–8540, Japan
Phone: +81–52–411–1115
http://www.doho.ac.jp/~meion/
E-mail: meion@doho.ac.jp

## Nagoya Zokei University Art and Design

6004, Nenjozaka, Okusaaza, Oaza, Komaki, Aichi Pref. 485–8553, Japan
Phone: +81–568–79–1111
Fax: +81–568–79–1070
http://www.doho.ac.jp/~zokei/top.html
E-mail: nzu_web@doho.ac.jp

## Nihon Fukushi University

Okuda, Mihama-cho, Chita, Aichi Pref. 470–3295, Japan
Phone: +81–569–87–2212
Fax: +81–569–87–5849
http://www.n-fukushi.ac.jp/ENGLISH/TOP.HTML
E-mail: webmaster@ml.n-fukushi.ac.jp

## Ohtani Women's University

3–11–1, Nishikiorikita, Tondabayashi, Osaka Pref. 584–8540, Japan
Phone: +81–721–24–0381
Fax: +81–721–24–5741
http://www.ohtani-w.ac.jp/daigaku/index.html
E-mail: webadmin@ohtani-w.ac.jp

## Otani University

Koyama, Kamifusa-cho, Kita-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 603–8143, Japan
Phone: +81–75–432–3131
http://www.otani.ac.jp/en/index.html
E-mail: webmaster@otani.ac.jp

## Rissho University

4–2–16, Osaki, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141–8602, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3492–0377
http://www.ris.ac.jp/en/index.html
E-mail: bst@ris.ac.jp

## Ryukoku University

67, Tsukamoto-cho, Fukakusa, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 612–8577, Japan
Phone: +81–75–642–1111
Fax: +81–75–642–8867

http://www.ryukoku.ac.jp/english/index.html
E-mail: webmaster@fks.ryukoku.ac.jp

## Saitama Institute of Technology

1690, Fusaiji, Okabemachi, Osato, Saitama Pref. 369–0293, Japan
Phone: +81–48–585–2521
Fax: +81–48–585–2523
http://www.sit.ac.jp/
E-mail: webmaster@sit.ac.jp

## Shuchiin University

70, Mukaijima, Nishijouke, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 612 8156, Japan
Phone: +81–75–604–5600
Fax: +81–75–604–5610
http://www.shuchiin.ac.jp/index.html
E-mail: officel@shuchiin.ac.jp

## Shukutoku University

200, Daiganji-cho, Chuo-ku, Chiba, Chiba Pref. 260–8701, Japan
Phone: +81–43–265–7331
http://www.shukutoku.ac.jp/

## Soai University

4–4–1, Nankoh, Naka, Suminoe-ku, Osaka, Osaka Pref. 559–0033, Japan
Phone: +81–6–6612–5900
http://www.soai.ac.jp/
E-mail: webmas@soai.ac.jp

## Taisho University

3–20–1, Nishisugamo, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 170–8470, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3918–7311
Fax: +81–3–5394–3037
http://www.tais.ac.jp/index2.html
E-mail: info@mail.tais.ac.jp

## Tohoku Fukushi University

1–8–1, Kunimi, Aoba-ku, Sendai, Miyagi Pref. 981–8522, Japan
Phone: +81–22–233–3111
http://www.tfu.ac.jp/
E-mail: wmaster@tfu-mail.tfu.ac.jp

## Tsurumi University

2–1–3, Tsurumi, Tsurumi-ku, Yokohama, Kanagawa Pref. 2308501, Japan
Phone: +81–45–581–1001
Fax: +81–45–584–4588
http://www.tsurumi-u.ac.jp/top.html

## Academic Societies and Institutes (listed alphabetically)

### Association of Buddhist Philosophy
1–20–1, Akabane-nishi, Kita-ku, Tokyo 115–0055, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3907–3126
Fax: +81–3– 5993–3344

### Buddhist Folklore Society
Taisho University
3–20–1, Nishisugamo, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 170–8470, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3918–7311
Fax: +81–3–5394–3037
http://www.tais.ac.jp/index2.html

### The Institute of Eastern Culture
2–4–1, Nishi-kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101–0065, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3262–7221
Fax: +81–3–3262–7227
E-mail: tohogakkai@mc.nextlink.ne.jp

### Japanese Association for Buddhist Social Welfare Studies
Shukutoku University
200, Daiganji-cho, Chuo-ku, Chiba, Chiba Pref. 260–8701, Japan
Phone: +81–43–265–7331
Fax: +81–43–265–8310

### Japanese Association for Religious Studies
Ruman-hongo 2–205, 1–29–7, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan
Phone: +81–3–5684–5473
Fax: +81–3–5684–5474
E-mail: ja-religion@mub.biglobe.ne.jp

### Japanese Association of Esoteric Buddhist Study
3–20–1, Nishi-sugamo, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 170–8470, Japan
Phone: +81–3–3918–7311

## Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies

Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, The University of Tokyo
7–3–1, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113–0033, Japan
Phone: +81–3–5841–3754
Fax: +81–3–5841–3754
E-mail: intetsu@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp

## Nihon Kindai Bukkyoshi Kenkyukai

Faculty of Buddhist Studies, Risshō University
4–2–16, Osaki, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141–8602, Japan
Phone: +81–3–5487–3266
Fax: +81–3–5487–3267

## The Nippon Buddhist Education Research Association

Faculty of Education, Bukkyo University
96, Kitahananobo-cho, Murasakino, Kita-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 603–8301, Japan
Phone: +81–75–491–2141
Fax: +81–75–493–9031
E-mail: takeuchi@bukkyo-u.ac.jp

## The Nippon Buddhist Research Association

Bukkyo University
96, Kitahananobo-cho, Murasakino, Kita-ku, Kyoto, Kyoto Pref. 603–8301, Japan
Phone: +81–75–491–2141
Fax: +81–75–493–9040

## Research Society of Buddhism and Cultural Heritage

The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University
3–20–1, Nishi-sugamo, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 170–8470, Japan
Phone: +81–3–5394–3036
Fax: +81–3–5394–3036

## Society for the Study of Pali and Buddhist Culture

Faculty of Letters, Aichi Gakuin University
12, Araike, Iwasaki-cho, Nissin, Aichi Pref. 470–0195, Japan
Phone: +81–5617–3–1111
Fax: +81–5617–3–8179

# 4. Bibliography on Buddhism

Today, an increasing number of people have become interested in Japanese Buddhism and inquire about English books on Japanese Buddhism suitable for the general reader. The following is a list of books available at bookstores or libraries throughout the world. The reader may begin with any of the books on this list but I suggest you start with the introductory books starred * in each section.

## Books on Buddhism in General

* Conze, Edward, et al., ed. ***Buddhist Texts through the Ages.*** Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1995.

*Anthology of excerpts and analysis of the canonical texts from the Theravada, Mahayana, and Tantric traditions of Buddhism.*

* De Bary, W. M. Theodore. ***The Buddhist Tradition in India, China & Japan.*** New York: Vintage Books, 1972.

*A truly excellent survey of Buddhism with excerpts from scriptural sources.*

Harvey, Peter. ***An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices.*** New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

*A general survey of Buddhism and its beliefs, including chapters on devotion, ethics, monastic practices, and meditation.*

Huston, Smith and Philip Novak. ***Buddhism: A Concise Introduction.*** New York: Harper San Francisco, 2003.

*A concise introduction to Buddhism, including Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, and others.*

Kasahara, Kazuo, et al. ***A History of Japanese Religion.*** Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 2001.

*The English translation of Kasahara's book on the history of Japanese religion.*

* Kashiwahara, Yusen and Koyu Sonoda, ed. ***Shapers of Japanese Buddhism.*** Trans. Gaynor Sekimori. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 1994.

*Twenty main biographies and 75 brief sketches of distinguished Japanese Buddhist priests are presented in this book.*

*LaFleur, William R. ***Buddhism: A Cultural Perspective.*** Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988.

*A review of the culture of Buddhism from India through China, Southeast Asia, Tibet, Japan, and the West.*

*Lopez, Donald S. Jr., ed. ***Buddhism in Practice.*** Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

*Presents Buddhism in practice through a selection of texts including hagiographies, monastic rules, pilgrimage songs, apocryphal sutras, and didactic tales from India, China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar.*

Matsunaga, Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga. ***Foundation of Japanese Buddhism.*** Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1978.
*A two-volume series on the systematic study of historical-sociological-political development of Buddhism.*

Matsunami, Kodo. ***Essentials of Japanese Buddhism.*** (Omega-Corn JABICS Books) Tokyo: Omega-Com, Inc., 2004.
*A comprehensive survey on the history and teaching of major Buddhist denominations in Japan.*

* Paul, Diana Y. ***Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahayana Tradition.*** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
*A survey and discussion of the position of women in Buddhism according to Mahayana texts.*

Snodgrass, Judith. ***Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition.*** Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
*Deals with a critical moment for understanding how Asian Buddhists reformulated the tradition in response to the West.*

Takasaki, Jikido. ***An Introduction to Buddhism.*** Tokyo: Toho Gakkai, 1987.
*The English translation of Takasaki's book written in Japanese.*

Takeuchi, Yoshinori, ed. ***Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World.*** New York: Crossroad, 1999.
*An encyclopedic history of Buddhist spirituality found in later China, Korea, Japan, and the modern world.*

Tamura, Yoshiro. ***Japanese Buddhism: A Cultural History.*** Trans. by Jeffrey Hunter. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 2000.
*The English translation of Tamura's book on Japanese Buddhism.*

Takada, Yoshihito. ***Talking about Buddhism.*** Trans. by James M. Vardaman. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1997.
*A concise introduction to Japanese Buddhist ways of life.*

***The Teaching of Buddha.*** Tokyo: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, 2002.
*A simple introduction to Buddhism for the general reader, often referred to as the Buddhist Gideon Bible, and available by contacting Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism).*

* Williams, Paul. ***Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations.*** London and New York: Routledge, 1989.
*Deals with the doctrinal foundations of Mahayana Buddhism from India, China, and Japan.*

## Books on Tendai and Shingon Buddhism

* Abe, Ryuichi. ***The Weaving of Mantra: Kukai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse.*** New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
    *Deals with Kukai's introduction and development of Shingon.*

Groner, Paul. ***Ryogen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002.
    *The history and influence of Ryogen, an important figure in tenth century Tendai Buddhism.*

• Groner, Paul. ***Saicho: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.
    *The history and teaching of Saicho, the founder of Japanese Tendai school in the eighth century.*

• Hakeda, Yoshito S. ***Kukai and His Major Works.*** New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.
    *The major works of Kukai, the founder of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism, are translated in the book.*

Kiyota, Minoru. ***Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice.*** Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1978.
    *Presents a survey of the background, philosophy, and basic doctrines of Shingon Buddhism in Japan.*

Petzold, Bruno. ***Tendai Buddhism.*** Yokohama: International Buddhist Exchange Center, 1979.
    *A collection of prewar essays on Japanese Tendai Buddhism*

Shiba, Ryotaro. ***Kukai the Universal: Scenes from His Life.*** Trans. by Akiko Takemoto. New York: ICG Muse, 2003.
    *A novel concerning the life of Kukai, the eighth-century founder of Shingon Buddhism in Japan.*

* Statler, Oliver. ***Japanese Pilgrimage.*** Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1983.
    *The story of the pilgrimage on the island of Shikoku to sites related to Kukai.*

Stone, Jacqueline I. ***Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.
    *Deals with the original enlightenment discourse and its place in medieval Japanese religion.*

• Swanson, Paul L. ***Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism.***

Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989.
*A comprehensive study of the teaching of the Threefold Truth in Tendai Buddhism.*

Van Der Veere, Hendr. ***A Study into the Thought of Kogyo Daishi Kakuban.*** Hotei Publishing, 2000.
*The philosophy and influence of Kakuban, the founder of Shingi Shingon Buddhism.*

Yamamoto, Chikyo. ***Introduction to the Mandala.*** Kyoto: Dohosha, 1980.
*An introduction to the Vajra and Womb Mandalas, with diagrams of the mandalas and lists of the Sanskrit names of the many deities, and a brief explanation.*

Yamasaki, Taiko. ***Shingon: Japanese Esoteric Buddhism.*** Trans. by Richard and Cynthia Peterson. Boston: Shambhala (Random House), 1988.
*Traces the origins and development of esoteric Buddhism from India to Japan.*

## Books on Pure Land Buddhism

Amstutz, Galen. ***Interpreting Amida: History and Orientalism in the Study of Pure Land Buddhism.*** Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
*The author demonstrates how the sources of western and Eastern misunderstanding of Pure Land Buddhism have been engendered.*

Andreasen, Esben. ***Popular Buddhism in Japan: Shin Buddhist Religion and Culture.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.
*A survey of Shin Buddhist religion and culture from a Western point of view.*

Bloom, Alfred, ed. ***Living in Amida's Universal Vow: Essays on Shin Buddhism.*** Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2004.
*A collection of essays by leading Buddhist scholars forming the best anthology of Shin Buddhism.*

Blum, Mark L. ***The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyonen's Jodo Homon Genrusho.*** Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.
*A study and translation of Gyonen's Jodo Homon Genrusho the major work of Honen's disciple.,*

* Dobbins, James C. ***Jodo Shinshu: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan.*** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
*Traces the tradition of Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan up to the period of Rennyo, a disciple of Shinran.*

* Gomez, Luis. ***Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light: Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhavativyuha Sutras.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996.

*The English translation with scholarly introduction of the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the shorter and longer Amida Sutras.*

Hattori, Sho-on. ***A Raft from the Other Shore: Honen and the Way of Pure Land Buddhism. Tokyo:*** Jodo Shu Press, 2000.

*An introductory book on the way of Pure Land Buddhism for the general reader.*

Hirota, Dennis. ***No Abode: The Record of Ippen.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.

*Ippen's work is made known to the West for the first time through this translation.*

Hirota, Dennis. ***Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism: Creating a Shin Buddhist Theology in a Religiously Plural World.*** Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

*Essays presented by three Buddhists and two Christians discuss matters on the contemporary understanding of Pure Land Buddhism.*

Inagaki, Hisao. ***The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation.*** Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1994.

*A translation from Chinese of the three Pure Land sutras (the Larger Amida Sutra, the Smaller Amida Sutra, and the Contemplation Sutra), including an introduction to Pure Land thought.*

Itsuki, Hiroyuki. ***Tariki: Embracing Despair, Discovering Peace.*** Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001.

*Drawing upon his own personal experience, the Japanese renowned novelist introduces "Tariki," the Other Power that is the core belief of Pure Land Buddhism.*

Machida, Soho. ***Renegade Monk: Honen and Pure Land Buddhism.*** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

*The life and teaching of Honen, the founder of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, is explained.*

* Payne, Richard, ed. ***Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.

*The collection of essays presented at the 1989 meeting of the American Academy of Religion (Anaheim, California) challenging the standard interpretation of Kamakura Buddhism.*

* Senchakushu English Translation Project, ed. and trans. ***Honen's Senchakushu: Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.

*The English translation of Hōnen's passages on the selection of the nembutsu on the original vow.*

Tanaka, Kenneth K. ***Ocean: An Introduction to Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism in America.*** Berkeley: Wisdom Ocean Publications, 1997.
*A good introductory book on True Pure Land Buddhism for the layperson interested in Buddhism.*

Tanaka, Kenneth K. and Eisho Nasu, ed. ***Engaged Pure Land Buddhism: The Challenges of Jodo-Shinshu in the Contemporary World.*** Berkeley: Wisdom Ocean Publications, 1998.
*A collection of essays by various Buddhist scholars facing the challenges of Jodo Shinshu in the contemporary world.*

Unno, Taitetsu. ***Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn into Gold.*** New York: Doubleday, 2002.
*Professor Emeritus Unno at Smith College traces the essence of the Pure Land tradition of Shin Buddhism.*

Unno, Taitetsu. ***River of Fire, River of Water: An Introduction to the Pure Land Tradition of Shin Buddhism.*** New York: Doubleday, 1998.
*Introducing the Pure Land tradition of Shin Buddhism.*

## Books on Nichiren Buddhism and the *Lotus Sutra*

Christensen, J.A. ***Nichiren: Leader of Buddhist Reformation in Japan.*** Fremont, CA: Jain Publishing Co., 2001.
*Originally published by Nichiren Buddhist Order of America in 1981, this book conveys the basic teaching of Nichiren, the founder of Nichiren Buddhism.*

* Hurvitz, Leon, trans. ***Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma.*** New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.
*Out of print, but the standard scholarly translation of the Lotus Sutra (accessible in most major libraries)*

* Kato, Bunno, et al., trans. ***The Threefold Lotus Sutra.*** Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1989.
*Translation of the Lotus Sutra with the two supplementary sutras that are often appended in Japan as the opening and concluding sutras, the Sutra of Innumerable Meanings and the Sutra of Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue.*

Kern, H., trans. ***Saddharma Pundarika or The Lotus of the True Law.*** Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2003.
*A rare attempt at translation from the Sanskrit.*

Kyotsu, Hori. ***Writings of Nichiren Shonin: Doctrine 1.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003; ***Writings of Nichiren Shonin: Doctrine 2.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002.
*English translation of 18 writings of Nichiren from his collected works.*

Nawano, Nikkyo. A ***Guide to the Threefold Lotus Sutra.*** Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1982.
*An interpretation of the Lotus Sutra according to the author, the founder of Rissho Koseikai.*

Reeves, Gene, ed. ***A Buddhist Kaleidoscope: Essays on the Lotus Sutra.*** Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2003.
*Essays analyzing the Lotus Sutra from variety of angles, with a foreword by Nikkyo Niwano, the founder of Rissho Koseikai.*

Soothill, William Edward, trans. ***The Lotus of the Wonderful Law, or the Lotus of Gospel: Saddharma Pundarika Sutra Mao-Fa Lien Hua Ching.*** London, et al.: Routledge Curzon, 1996.
*One of the earliest translations of the Lotus Sutra by a renowned Chinese scholar (now available in a reprint edition).*

* Tanabe, George and Willa Tanabe, ed. ***The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1989.
*Important collection of essays by leading scholars on the reception of the Lotus Sutra in Japanese culture. Now out of print, but worth accessing at a major library.*

Watson, Burton, trans. ***The Lotus Sutra.*** New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
*The translator is well known for his translations of Chinese and Japanese texts.*

* Yampolsky, Philip B., ed. ***Selected Writings of Nichiren.*** Trans. Burton Watson, et al. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
*Deals with selected writings of Nichiren, the founder of Nichiren Buddhism.*

## Books on Zen Buddhism

Abe, Masao. ***Zen and the Modern World: A Third Sequel to Zen and Western Thought.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003.
*Abe, as a leading representative of the Kyoto school, addresses Zen Buddhism in the context of Western thought.*

Aitken, Robert. ***A Zen Wave: Basho's Haiku and Zen.*** New York: Weatherhill, 1979.
*An English interpretation of Matsuo Basho's haiku and interpretation according to Zen Buddhism.*

Baroni, Helen J. ***Obaku Zen: The Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa Japan.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.

*A study of the Obaku Zen sect introduced to Japan by Chinese monks in the 17th century.*

Batchelor, Stephen. ***Buddhism without Beliefs: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening.*** New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.

*Simple introduction to the practice of Buddhism for the Western reader.*

* Cleary, Thomas, trans. ***Shobogenzo: Zen Essays by Dogen.*** Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.

*The Shobogenzo, "Treasury of the Eye of True Teaching," was written in the 13th century by Dogen, the founder of Soto Zen in Japan.*

Collcutt, Martin. ***Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan.*** Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

*Concerns the establishment of the Rinzai Zen monastic system in Japan, known as the Five Mountains after the five designated temples of Rinzai.*

Haskel, Peter. ***Bankei Zen: Translations from the Record of Bankei.*** New York: Grove/Atlantic, 1989.

*An English translation of the writings of Benkei, an Edo-period Zen master.*

Hodge, Stephen. ***The World of Zen: The Way to Inner Calm.*** New York: Sterling Publishing, 2004.

*A pictorial book that contains articles about Zen in the context of practice, daily life, health, the environment, and the arts.*

Kapleau, Philip. ***The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment.*** New York, et al: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1989.

*Introduces the Westerner to the basics of Zen, written by a Western Zen master.*

Kapleau, Philip. ***Zen: Dawn in the West.*** New York, et al: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1980.

*A companion volume to Kapleau's The Three Pillars of Zen, first published in 1965, and has sold over 150,000 copies in English.*

Kennet, Jiyu. ***Zen is Eternal Life.*** Mt. Shasta: Shasta Abbey Press, 2000.

*A practical manual for all who wish to practice Sōtō Zen written by a woman Zen master.*

* Kim, Hee-Jin. ***Eihei Dogen: Mystical Realist.*** Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004.

*A biography of Eihei Dogen, the founder of Soto Zen in Japan.*

McClain, Gary and Eve Adamson. ***The Complete Idiot's Guide to Zen Living.*** Indianapolis, Pearson Education Co., 2001.

*A popular explanation of Zen for the laymen.*

* Reps, Paul, ed. ***Zen Flesh, Zen Bones.*** Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1998.

*Inspiring Zen anecdotes in English translation.*

Shigematsu, Soiku. ***A Zen Harvest: Japanese Folk Zen Sayings: Haiku, Dodoitsu and Waka.*** San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988.

*A collection of Japanese folk Zen sayings found in haiku, dodoitsu, and waka.*

Simpkins, Annellen M. and Alexander Simpkins. ***Zen around the World: A 2500-Year Journey from the Buddha to You.*** Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1997.

*A introductory survey of the development of Buddhism.*

Smith, Jean. ***365 Zen: Daily Readings.*** San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999.

*A handy collection of daily Zen readings of memorable sayings, stories, poems, and koans.*

* Suzuki, Daisetzu. ***Zen and Japanese Culture.*** Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

*Originally published in Japan in 1938 under the title Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture.*

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